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Yvette McCauley

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Walden University
2016

Abstract

Adult Literacy Program Evaluation
for First Year Traditional College Students

by

Yvette Folden McCauley

MEd, American Intercontinental University, 2007

BS, Davenport University, 2004

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University

January 2016

Abstract

First year traditional college students required to register in a sequence of remedial courses prior to enrollment in credit-bearing courses often get discouraged by the financial burden and time commitments of this additional work and, subsequently, decide to drop out. The purpose of this qualitative program evaluation was to examine the effectiveness of the remedial adult literacy program being used at a 4-year urban college in the northeast and assess the curriculum alignment with the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) standards. Knowles theory of andragogy, which suggests that adults are self-directed and expect to take responsibility for their own decisions, was the conceptual framework for this study. Research questions addressed participants' perceptions of the current adult literacy program. All 60 students enrolled in the adult literacy program completed open-ended questionnaires and participated in focus group interviews. Two faculty and 3 administrators responsible for the adult literacy program completed questionnaires and participated in individual interviews. Thematic coding and member checks allowed for data triangulation to analyze the findings. Three themes emerged to improve the quality and effectiveness of the current program: reform of instructional program, technology intervention, and enhancing student learning through assessment. Staff members did not think curriculum aligned with CHEA standards. The majority of students and staff preferred a media versus text-based curriculum. Social change is promoted by continued program evaluation and integrating technology in adult literacy programs to improve student achievement and self-efficacy, prompting greater college completion and workforce preparation.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Many students need a bridge from high school to college, which allows them to take remedial courses before enrolling in college-level classes. Approximately 28% (1.7 million students) of first year 2- or 4-year college students entering postsecondary degree institutions were enrolled in remedial courses between 2005 and 2010 (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2013; National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2013). According to Haynes (2012) and the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL; 2010), students spent more than \$3 billion on remedial courses with limited student success. Additionally, the Community College Research Center/Teacher's College Columbia University (2011) found a disproportionate number of first year traditional college students required to take a sequence of remedial courses before signing up for credit-bearing courses often get discouraged and drop out of college because they do not feel their academic needs are being met (National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, 2009). Students feel being required to take noncredit courses are not only a financial burden but also an encumbrance on their time when they should be advancing toward a degree. Underprepared first year traditional college students can successfully complete college-level English and adult literacy courses that are the gateways to their programs of study on time in their first year, when they enroll directly in first year courses instead of taking remedial courses (Kazis et al., 2007).

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, focused on standards-based education reform to set high standards while establishing measurable goals leading to improved educational outcomes (NCLB, 2002). One of the main goals for NCLB was to develop assessment for basic skills (NCLB 2001, 2002). As a result of the required assessment, some schools identified weaknesses in their adult literacy program (NCES, 2013). Students were graduating from high school without being college ready and requiring remedial courses prior to taking full credit courses (NCES, 2013). The U.S. Department of Education's Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965's (ESEA) Blueprint for Reform was designed to improve high school graduates' college readiness (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). According to Adelman (2006), college readiness is a complex benchmark measured by transcript analysis and standardized test scores, such as those from the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or American College Testing (ACT). Colleges look beyond a simple formula to admit traditional, incoming freshman and determine readiness and the need for remedial coursework enrollment based on several factors, such as (a) SAT or ACT results, (b) if students have attained a high school or General Educational Development (GED) diploma but have never attended a college or university since high school, and (c) the results of the college placement test (NCES, 2013). The current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the college being evaluated for this study employed teacher-led, text-based instruction, which appears to leave the students unfulfilled (NCSALL, 2007; NCES, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Integrating technology into instruction might

be necessary to create a successful and engaging learning experience, which would allow for the development of language skills and technology skills.

An educated and trained workforce is a key component for economic growth (Amos, 2012). In order for America to compete in a global economy and world market, students will need to be educated so that families can earn a sustaining wage (National Commission of Adult Literacy [NCAL], 2013). According to Wei and Horn (2013), America is currently in a crisis and the American workforce is seriously underprepared and under trained. Students leaving college before graduating without the requisite skills necessary to be successful often incur huge debt without the ability to pay it back (Wei & Horn, 2013). Colleges and universities are looking for ways, inside and outside the classroom, to retain and graduate students to create an educated workforce (McCrary, 2013). According to NCAL (2008), many students enter college with poor basic literacy skills, needing additional academic support. Colleges often turn to an adult literacy program for first year traditional college students for supplemental instruction to prepare these students for success in traditional college courses (NCAL, 2013). Students want to feel like they are making forward progress toward the degree they are pursuing. A major concern about adult literacy programs for traditional college students is that they do not provide the innovation, resources, and instructional strategies needed to help students develop sufficient enough literacy skills to succeed in college, which may put them at risk in the workforce and society (NCSALL, 2007).

In this project study, I investigated the current adult literacy program offered for first year traditional college students at a 4-year urban college in the northeast (from this

point on in the document I will refer to it as, the College). I conducted a program evaluation with a qualitative approach to examine the effectiveness of the current adult literacy program being used as a remedial program. Section 1 includes a discussion of the problem that is the basis for this study, the rationale for studying this topic, key definitions, the related prior research, research significance, and potential implications of the findings.

Definition of the Problem

The College has been using a traditional teacher-led, text-based adult literacy program for first year traditional college students who require remediation prior to enrolling in for-credit courses. According to the educational director for the program at the College, the current adult literacy program had not been evaluated for more than 11 years to assess whether the curriculum is in line with the standards of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the College's centralized recognition of accrediting organization (D. T., personal communication, February 9, 2012). The goal of this program evaluation was to identify whether the adult literacy program offered at the time of this study meets the standards set forth by the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010) and whether changes, if any, should be made.

The CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010), as it applies to educational programs for quality assurance and quality improvement, and the educational director share a mission to ensure that first year traditional college students at the College are sufficiently prepared to complete entry

level courses by offering a revised adult literacy program as a full credit college course. Engaging students in the program and getting them to complete the curriculum benefits the students by allowing them to graduate on time from their degree program of study, accrue limited student loan debt, and enter the workforce prepared. First year traditional college students at the College are students meeting entrance requirements and entering as incoming freshman directly out of high school. Students accepted to the College but identified with low literacy skills are directed to improve their skills through remediation courses prior to entering courses offering credit in the adult literacy program (Community College Research Center, 2011).

The adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College is funded in part by the federal government with matching funds from a state grant funding agency (National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2013). Funding is nationally competitive and is dependent on the educational department's ability to demonstrate need for the program and its alignment with the supporting institution's mission (National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2013). The program need is demonstrated by the college's ability to provide evidence that they have a population of students who meet the criteria to receive adult literacy program funding for first year traditional college students at the college (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

The students who are eligible for the adult literacy program are first year traditional college students at the College who are identified with low scores on the SAT/ACT literacy portion (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). In February 2012, the vice president of the College indicated that a program evaluation of the current adult

literacy program would demonstrate accountability, quality, and transparency to ensure that postsecondary education credentials provide effective preparation for students (H. C., personal communication, February 9, 2012). A program evaluation of the current adult literacy program would provide evidence of alignment with the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010) and evidence of the program's contribution to meeting student achievement and graduate employment and placement rates. The graduate employment and placement percentage for the College is calculated as the aggregate of graduates reporting graduate school enrollment, satisfactory employment, or military enlistment divided by the number of graduates that report to the Career Services Department (Career services office annual report 2011, 2012).

The vice president of the college acknowledged that without federal funding the current adult literacy program would not exist at the College and that the lack of funding could adversely affect thousands of students and perhaps terminate instructional strategies required to help students develop sufficient enough literacy proficiency abilities to succeed in college and in the workforce (H. C., personal communication, February 9, 2012). Some first year traditional college students at the College are not academically prepared to meet the demands required in college and lack the literacy skills necessary to become competitive in a global economy. The academic dean of all curricula acknowledged that there was a problem with the adult literacy program design for first year traditional college students at the College at the time of the study (S. B., personal communication, February 10, 2013). The program was a teacher-led, text-based

instruction, which appeared to leave the traditional first year undergraduate students unfulfilled and could lead to students falling below academic expectations and low achievement. Systematic reform to the adult literacy program was needed to meet student outcomes.

Rationale

In the following sections, I explain why I chose this problem, and I also describe the importance of the problem. The rationale for choosing the project problem of the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College is that the educational director of this department stated that such an evaluation had not been conducted for more than 11 years and standards of the CHEA had not been met. The CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010) provided a model and guidelines towards common principals for evaluating higher education and programs and delivering 21 century quality assurance.

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

According to the educational director at the College, an evaluation had not been conducted and standards had not been identified to measure the effectiveness of curriculum to determine compliance of the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students (D. T., personal communication, February 9, 2012). Grades were dropping and they needed to know which of their programs was the most effective and/or what was missing from their programs. According to Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopkins, and Caruthers (2011), “evaluations should devote attention to the full range of individuals and groups invested in the program and affected by its evaluation” (p. 1). Ensuring that

all stakeholders have a voice in the evaluation process, increases investment in the proposed changes which in turn encourages success.

My role as an experienced educator has allowed me to observe and identify student attitudes towards the program at the time of the study. It appeared that a paradigm shift was needed in the quality of the college academic preparation, specifically adding the integration of technology, interactive online writing activities, and offering tutoring to the adult literacy program. Adding team collaboration and other one-on-one or small group instructional approaches delivered primarily by volunteers and/or mentors may help to strengthen the adult literacy program and improve instructional outcomes to deliver a quality program. The textbook and face-to-face instruction did not appear to meet the needs of low-literate learners. Integrating a technology based program could promote adult literacy skills (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

The need to close the literacy achievement gap affecting first year traditional college students is a global issue (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 2015). The goal of this study was to conduct an evaluation using standards of CHEA for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010) in conjunction with the academic stakeholders to maximize the potential for meeting the needs of low-literate first year traditional college students at the College, which could help to identify gaps in resources and services needed to address the expectations of stakeholders and challenges of students who require the use of those resources and services. Potential data sources included: the College website, archival data and reports, documented protocols,

publications, questionnaires, observations, and faculty characteristics (i.e., education, experience, etc.).

A well reformed adult literacy program integrating technology could help first year traditional college students to improve student performance and increase learner self-efficacy by developing the language skills they need combined with the technology skills and knowledge that could influence them to stay in college and prepare them for the workforce (NCES, 2013). According to Mongillo and Wilder (2012), “technology is now viewed as a necessary component of, and a means to, achieving literacy” (p. 28). Therefore, technology should become a central component of the adult literacy course and the Internet should be integrated as a tool to promote linguistic skills (Mongillo & Wilder, 2012).

Since 1973, continuing advancements in technology have shifted the United States toward a knowledge-based economy, with the share of U.S. jobs requiring a postsecondary education increasing from 28% to 60% (Carnevale, 2012). Employees are expected to work with different types of information in order to communicate effectively and solve problems. Students enrolled in the adult literacy program at the College are given an opportunity to develop their English language skills. However, if students do not gain the foundational literacy skills, they may not be academically prepared for the college curriculum and beyond, which could make gainful employment difficult. At the time of the study, a technology component did not exist in the adult literacy curriculum. Designing and developing a technology component could ensure that students obtain skills for a knowledge-based economy. If students leave college without the proper

training, they may find it difficult to obtain a position in their desired field, which could lead to economic hardship.

The local setting. The adult literacy first year program has been offered for 20 years at the College (a 4-year urban campus in the northeastern United States). According to the 2013 Census Report, the population in the area is estimated at 233,000 with ethnic minorities representing over 40% of the city's residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Eighty-three percent of the adults graduate from high school and are gainfully employed; however, many of the adults struggle with basic literacy skills: critical thinking, information literacy, reading, and writing (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). An effective adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College could be an important resource to success in college and gaining employment.

Environment. The College provides a social and organizational learning environment which encourages students to succeed. A Learning Resource Center, student lounge, and organized small work teams encourage interaction and group discussion. The college courses are led by instructors who have work experience in their chosen field in industry (the College, 2013). Furthermore, each classroom is equipped and arranged to resemble a work environment corresponding with each course, giving the students hands-on clinical work experience.

The College offers associate and bachelor degrees and certificate programs in the following areas: medical assistant; dental assistant; pharmacy technician; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning; electrician; criminal justice; business; and paralegal (the College, 2013). Students are expected to attain employment by completing a diploma

or linear (degree) program. The organizational structure of the College includes the departments of Academic and Student Services, Admissions, Finance and Administration, Institutional Planning and Assessment, Institutional Advancement, Instructional and Instructional Technology, and Workforce Development. Administrators, faculty, staff, and administrative support personnel prepare students for educational opportunities.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

A number of researchers present evidence of the problem discussed from a larger perspective. According to Adelman (2006) and Greene and Winters (2007), many students need a bridge from high school to college allowing them to take remedial courses before enrolling in college-level classes. Unfortunately, a disproportionate number of first year traditional college students required to take a sequence of remedial courses before signing up for credit-bearing courses often get discouraged and drop out of college because they do not feel their academic needs are being met (Fletcher, 2009; National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, 2009). Students feel being required to take noncredit courses is not only a financial burden but also an encumbrance on their time when they should be advancing toward a degree (Fletcher, 2009). Underprepared first year traditional college students can successfully complete college-level English and adult literacy courses that are the gateways to their programs of study on time in their first year when they enroll directly in first year courses instead of taking remedial courses (Corrin, 2013).

Issues related to timely evaluations and resources of the current program are preventing the education system from developing an effective program for first year traditional college students (Corrin, 2013). A portion of the elements restricting instructors from using the technology based instructional strategies needed to help students develop their literacy proficiency skills include the current adult literacy program design, lack of a program evaluation of the current adult literacy program, and evidence of the program's contribution to meeting student achievement (the College, 2013). In order to reform the current adult literacy program, efforts to evaluate the program once a year, reimplement it, and perhaps expand it are encouraged (Hutchison & Reinking, 2011). However, if the goals of the adult literacy program reform are to be realized, the literacy department must promote innovative and more effective approaches to meet student outcomes. While the researchers discussed in this section described the problem from a broader perspective, they essentially offered direction for program evaluation that can address the issues faced by the College selected for this study.

Definitions

The following special terms were used throughout this study:

Adult secondary education (ASE): Burt, Peyton, and Schaetzel (2008) described adult secondary education classes as for students to earn high school equivalency certificates. ASE is direction in essential abilities at or over the ninth grade level (9-12). ASE includes secondary school and GED classes.

Attrition rate: The action or process of a reduction in the number of persons that occurs when people leave and are not replaced (Rastog & Sureka, 2014).

First year traditional college student: Conventional 18-23 year olds, selected full-time, living on grounds, and, generally, starting with classes at the college level. (DeAngelo, 2014).

Information literacy: A set of abilities calling for individuals to “recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information” (Association of College and Research Libraries, American Library Association, 2013, p. 1).

Literacy: An individual who can read, write, and think critically is literate (UNESCO, 2008).

Low literacy: Level 1 literacy proficiency is generally portrayed as not as much as fifth-grade cognition and understanding. Level 2 proficiency is by and large characterized as fifth through seventh grade level thinking and understanding capacities (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

Noncredit courses: These are noncredit remedial courses for which you pay college tuition without receiving college credit (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

Self-efficacy: In academics, an individual’s ability to identify value and determine what opportunities are intrinsically motivating and meaningful for cognitive engagement (Walker, Greene, & Mansell, 2006).

Teaching practices: Effective teaching requires a dialogue that is relevant and leads to critical thinking and progression which causes students to think about content in a new way (Maxwell, Vincent, & Ball, 2012).

Significance

Students who struggle with low literacy (reading, writing, comprehension, and communication) can see effects on their self-efficacy because of being unable to make connections in their core subjects (English, mathematics, science with one lab portion, fine arts courses, social science courses, and possibly diversity and racial issues courses), keeping up with the rigors of course work, and having poor comprehension in their courses, which can lead to low motivation (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2012; Bifuh-Ambe, 2011; Comings, Reder, & Sum, 2001; Kanno & Varghese, 2010; Kasper, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Students often fail to graduate from college and they are unable to maintain satisfying employment, which can lead to their inability to repay student loans and eventual default to the government or lender. The majority of students leave secondary school without the proper reading and writing aptitudes required to succeed in school and a vocation (National Commission of Adult Literacy, 2008). Per the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), more than 60% of 12th-grade understudies scored underneath the capable level in literacy accomplishment, and 27% scored beneath the essential level in literacy, which implies these least performing secondary school seniors do not even have fractional authority of the proper evaluation level learning and aptitudes.

The expenses to the individual and the country are amazing; only one class of dropouts will mean an expected \$154 billion in lost wages and profit over their working lifetime (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2012). Time only exacerbates the problem created by students dropping out, which leads to the *Matthew effect* (Stanovich, 1986). The Matthew effect refers to students who have a solid literacy foundation who

accelerate, while their less fortunate peers whom lack the necessary skills to perform complex literacy tasks fall further behind with each passing year (Stanovich, 1986). Stanovich (1986) described this phenomenon as an instance of the “rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer” (p. 362). Research indicated that adult students with low literacy skills generally demonstrate low reading comprehension (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2012; Bifuh-Ambe, 2011; Comings, Reder, & Sum, 2001; Kanno & Varghese, 2010; Kasper, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2010). In this study, I used the Matthew effect theory, “the rich get richer and the poor get poorer” to reveal insight into the sources of struggling adult learners’ problems in reading, to discuss instructional ramifications for enhancing their reading proficiency abilities, and to recommend research-supported instructional strategies that may help prompt the positive Matthew effect of the “rich get richer” in low-literate struggling college students (Ari, 2013).

According to Ari (2013), the Matthew effect theory explains the sources of poor reading and writing skills in struggling college readers and discusses instructional implications for improving their literacy skills. Applying the Matthew effect in adult education practice can help educators identify students needing supplementary instruction to lessen the gap between the students excelling and those falling behind. Ultimately, adult students whom are experiencing a lack of literacy find it difficult to integrate new ideas into prior knowledge and to accomplish work.

A fundamental component of addressing this local problem is implementing the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College to meet the needs of low-literate learners. The current adult literacy program for first year traditional

college students at the College addresses language and literacy development, information literacy, and critical thinking skills, which can be fundamental to the development of learning and functioning. The evaluation process encompasses identifying strengths and weaknesses of the current program. The outcome from the evaluation describes a new program based on data collected and current research.

Lloyd and Williamson (2008) reported “information literacy research is still in its infancy. Not only is the number of studies completed relatively small, the agenda is ill defined...” (p. 213). As supported by Shenton and Johnson (2008), few researchers have investigated the ways in which scholars understand the word, and define the term *information*, despite the fact that what is learned from such studies can have clear implications for practice. There appears to be a gap in the literature determining whether information literacy, technology, and library instruction is appropriate for the skills-based, pedagogical teaching practices in a technology enhanced learning environment and content knowledge levels of the students being taught. However, there does appear to be a scholarly consensus about the need for more research into the impact of and better comprehension of the level of accomplishment of these tools incorporated into an the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College (Lloyd & Williamson, 2008; Shenton & Johnson, 2008).

Guiding Research Questions

Over the past 25 years, research has shown that a well reformed adult literacy program for first year traditional college students integrating technology could also help first year traditional college students improve their performance and increase self-

efficacy. Through the development of language arts skills with a technology intervention, early student success could influence them to remain in college, which in turn helps prepare them for eventual success in the workforce (National Commission of Adult Literacy, 2010). This study focused on a program evaluation and reform of the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College. There has been a history at the College of using a primarily text-based program, which has not met the needs of low-literate students by failing to consider a language arts and/or technology intervention. This study was guided by three research questions:

RQ1: What are the faculty, education dean, and program education coordinator's perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College?

RQ2: What are first year traditional college students' perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College?

RQ3: Is the current curriculum in line with the standards of the CHEA?

These questions identified the benefits and challenges of the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College. A thorough review of the literature in the field of the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at colleges and universities identified possible interventions to fill the gap between what is currently being used and options for a new adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College.

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The objective of the literature review is to identify research specifically related to the evaluation of the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College. The literature review reflects a summary of current research from 2010-2014 related to the theoretical framework of adult learning theory, key components of successful remediation programs for first year traditional college students at colleges and universities, principles of literacy education, and social constructivist learning theory. The Matthew effect theory, which I discussed earlier in the paper, is not just based on the progressive decline of low-literate struggling college students falling behind and students excelling, it is also about closing the gap in the current program evaluation and reforming the current adult literacy program (Rigney, 2010). A reformed program could help employ innovative strategies to improve literacy and prevent the Matthew effect—“the rich get richer and the poor get poorer”—from occurring (Stanovich, 1986). Following Knowles’ (1984) theory of adult learners, the conceptual framework describes how first year traditional college students at the College can be successful in the adult literacy program.

The following electronic resources and databases were used in a variety of combinations and truncations to gather literature for this study: ERIC Educational, Education Research Complete, Google, and Google Scholar. I used multiple Boolean operators with the keyword searches (AND, OR, NOT) to broaden and then narrow the search truncation to result in variations of the terminology and entered search terms with and without parentheses to combine key concepts. The following keywords were used:

adult education, adult, college freshmen, at risks college freshmen, remedial instruction, enrollment, college readiness, public colleges, private colleges, two year colleges, selective admission, student characteristics, majors (students), associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, differences, higher education, postsecondary education, reading ability, literacy education, reading instruction, reading strategies, reading skills, computer uses in education, educational technology, writing assignments, writing skills, low literacy, and low-literate adult learners. I used multiple resources to complete the literature review, including Walden College's library and the Tidewater Community College's library databases, which consisted of reviewing scholarly articles; peer-reviewed publications; primary research journals; dissertations; DVDs; course books; official reports and publications of state, local, and federal government sites; Education from Sage; Science Direct; and the U.S. Department of Education. The literature review in the following section is a result of thorough research addressing the following subheadings and theories concerning program evaluation in adult education: adult learning theory, andragogy, social learning theories, language and literacy, information literacy, the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students, successful programs, program evaluation, impact of technology in teaching and learning, and technology integration.

Conceptual Framework

The successful evaluation and reform of an the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College could offer options for faculty who would consider adopting an innovative approach to instruction supported by the constructivist

theory, whereby students are active creators of knowledge. A key component of an adult learning program is to transform learning through activity. Knowles (1998) distinguished the need for adults to be propelled to learn, to engage in the learning process, and to have their past experiences regarded in the learning environment (p. 31). Most adults are interested in pursuing lifelong learning through continuing education (Council for Adult & Experiential Learning, 2013). Constructivism perceives learning as an experimental process in which interactive and adaptive skills (problem solving, critical thinking, exploration, experimentation, and reflection in an authentic location) are prioritized for a more meaningful acquisition of knowledge (Groves, 2010). Piaget (1972) believed children invent and reinvent knowledge because of their interaction with the world. As they grow into adults, children acquire knowledge through these interactions (Piaget, 1972).

Social-constructivism applies the theories of constructivism into social settings (Vygotsky, 1978). Constructivism applies to adult learners in real life situations as they experience self-direction, innovation, and creative intelligences through analysis, conceptualizations, and prior experiences (Vygotsky, 1978; Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2009). In this study, the directors overseeing the reformed adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College recognized the important role of technology in the learning environment. Educators using the constructivist theory prefer to use Web 2.0 technologies (Tabor, 2010). Web 2.0 is an interactive teaching tool used to enhance education and learning with technology (Hsu, Hamilton, & Wang, 2015). Performing group activities with interactive lectures is also considered by constructivists

to be beneficial (Charmaz, 2006). Theorists also argue that constructivist learning is superior to the pedagogical practice of learning by telling (Tabor, 2010) as instruction has been executed previously in the program for this study. Based on my experience as a literacy instructor, traditional literacy classes incorporate some elements of constructivism through the use of active learning approaches such as: critical thinking skills and problem solving skills. The following section outlines collaborative learning theories that could provide adult learners with more effective opportunities.

Adult learning theory. According to Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (1998), adults are motivated to “learn new knowledge, understandings, skills, values, and attitudes, most effectively when they are presented in the context of application to real-life situations” (p. 61). In 1984, Knowles' theory of andragogy was an attempt to develop a theory aimed specifically for adult learners. Knowles (1998) further contended that adults are self-directed and hope to assume liability for their own decisions. Brookfield (1986) explained that critical reflection is presumably the idea of a decade for some adult learners, providing six principles of effective practice and associating it with the teachers of adults:

1. Participation is voluntary; adults engage in learning as a result of their own volition.
2. Effective practice is characterized by a respect among participants for each other's self-worth.
3. Facilitation is collaborative.
4. Praxis is placed at the heart of effective facilitation.

5. Facilitation aims to foster in adults a spirit of critical reflection.
6. The aim of facilitation is the nurturing of self-directed, empowered adults. (pp. 13-14)

If school administrators fail to provide solid principles of effective practice for training adults, the impact of their retention rate could be negative. Good principles provide an adequate number of concrete examples, which in turns offers sufficient time for adults to actively experiment. Teaching approaches must reflect actual workplace situations and on-the-job writing tasks (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011). Knowles (1984) and Brookfield (1990) share the belief that effective principles of teaching and training adults involve the components of self-directed learning and the primary purpose appears to be the same. These principles incorporated into the adult literacy program could influence the learning experience for first year traditional college students.

Andragogy. Focusing specifically on learning strategies aimed at adults, andragogy is often interpreted as the process of creating positive and meaningful learning experiences for adult learners (Knowles, 1980). Andragogy makes the following assumptions about the principles of effective practice in adult learning, proposing a teacher should:

1. create a physical and psychological climate conducive to learning,
2. involve learners in the participation and planning of methods and curricular directions,
3. involve participants in identifying and determining their own learning needs,

4. encourage learners to formulate their own learning objectives,
5. encourage learners to identify resources and to devise strategies for using such resources to accomplish their objectives,
6. help learners to achieve their learning goals, and
7. assist learners to evaluate their learning outcomes. (Knowles et al., 1998, p. 61)

Subsequently, adult education programs could help adult learners if they were organized around life applications. Adult critical reflection is an essential piece of the transformational learning process (Mezirow, 2009). In my experience as an adult learner and educator, knowledge and understanding are important components if they are to help adult learners make sense of the world in the 21st century and could possibly be useful to other adult learners to better understand and meet day-to-day requirements. The connection of andragogy, critical reflection, and transformation learning is that they all are the kinds of learning adults do to make meaning of their lives.

Social learning theories. There are several assumptions and classic theories about how we learn and what motivates us to have a need for new learning as adults. With regard to transformative learning, it is the orientation of the individual becoming aware of one's self expectations as it relates to social change (Mezirow, 2000). Mezirow's (2000) theory can be translated into two simple postulates that identify possible transfer of learning strategies: (a) constructivism, which is when learners carefully interpret and reinterpret their experiences and is a process that involves instrumental learning; a learning through being task-orientated and analyzing cause-and-

effect to perform problem solving, and (b) cognitivism, where a learner, specifically adults, need to internally process information and learn through thinking, memory, reflection, and motivation (Mezirow, 2000, 2003, 2009, 2012). Piaget (1972) purported that children's development generally precedes their ability to learn and develop as young adults, which directly affects their ability to think logically about experiences and the processes by which learning occurs that involves engaging experiences that stimulate and personalize, cognitive adaptation, and social mediation that could have purpose and meaning to the learner. Vygotsky (1978) stated, “learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological function” (p. 90). Social learning can precede development (Chao, 2015). In addition, sociocultural learning theories and collective learning are applied to andragogy, language literacy, and information literacy in adult education by using different learning models that promote self-direction and lifelong learning as I will discuss in the review of the current related research that follows.

Language and Literacy

Caffarella (2010) discussed teaching approaches, good management of the classroom, and strong leadership as the conditions impacting the effectiveness of learning and student outcomes. Wlodkowski (2008) stated “without a model of culturally responsive instruction, continuity and organization of which to motivate, instructors cannot easily refine their teaching” (p. 4). The adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College and the components used to develop new methods of evaluation workshops, new technology, and curricula, together seek new

approaches to improve classroom instruction. Adults have special needs that should be taken into consideration as learners when planning training for adults. Bifuh-Ambe (2011) suggested adult students struggling with literacy would benefit from 5 to 7 years in an educational program prior to performing on the same level as their peers in literacy proficiency. Therefore, after approximately 2 years of adult literacy classes, underprepared students at the college or university level are generally unable to perform complicated functional literacy skills (Bifuh-Ambe, 2012). Furthermore, Bifuh-Ambe noted the ability to speak English and comprehension of language is crucial to the adjustment and well-being of adult students with learning disabilities in English to benefit fully academically and in society (p. 14). Limited literacy proficiency inhibits student academic and social success. Social constraints uncommon to this population include their limited language, reading and writing skills, and the students' own inclination to eliminate shame and embarrassment, leading to low self-esteem (Kanno, 2010, p. 310). Based on a humanistic perception of self-direction in adult learners, andragogy is addressed in the following section.

Information Literacy

Information literacy is a concept of educational constructivism which requires proper assessment strategies of an adult literacy curriculum that promotes more interaction in the classroom and knowledge building capabilities. Kolb (1984) believed learning acquisition occurs when abstract concepts can be put to practical use in a range of situations, describing the incentive for the development of new ideas is transferred by new experiences. Learning will have more impact when used with knowledge where

“knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 4).

Kolb's experiential learning style theory is often represented by a *four stage learning cycle* in which the learner 'touches every one of the bases':

1. Concrete experiences,
2. Reflective observation,
3. Abstract conceptualization, and
4. Active experimentation. (Kolb, 1984, p. 4)

Individuals first need to identify an experience and then reflect upon the experience. Through analysis, the individual is required to make sense of the experience before attempting to integrate it into a more extensive conceptual framework of the world in general (Knowles, 1984). The latter half of the stimulus reflection includes fitting the sense of the involvement into an individual's theory about how the world operates and how the program structure relates to their learning that is personally and monetarily fulfilling. Once he or she has cognitively processed that information in effect, and shaped a theory about how things work the individual tries the learning out, and this experimentation, consequently, prompts another experience on which he or she can reflect, interpret, and engage socially. Driscoll (2011) emphasized the importance of technology and getting adult learners involved in learning activities, which could construct meaning from their experiences. Driscoll stated that “Technology tools provide the means through which individuals engage and manipulate both resources and their own ideas” (p. 3).

A fundamental component of addressing this gap of shifting from the paradigm of text and integrating technology into the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College is creating a curriculum that meets first year traditional college student needs for English language arts and technology skills supporting their lifelong learning needs. Integrating technology into the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College could encourage the students to do more than just listen; technology could engage students to read, write, and solve problems while thinking about learning. Based on a study by Parker, Lenhart, and Moore (2011), 51% of the college presidents surveyed claimed that online courses add the same value as courses taken in a classroom. According to Eldakak (2012), before students began using computers as cognitive tools into the classroom, students experienced a lack of resources that could help to contribute richness and a variety to student work. For that reason, the integration of technology into the literacy curriculum may help the students to increase the likelihood of academic success. Technology use could promote active learning to students engaged in higher order thinking tasks, making choices, and executing skills than is typical in receiving information transmitted by teacher led lessons, primarily taught from textbooks (Eldakak, 2012). Goldstein and Perin (2008) believed that colleges need to make a shift in preparing first year traditional college students in College Prep 101 combined with technical training in order to provide a more responsible and well-educated, skilled workforce.

The NCAL (2010) conducted an analysis of American Community Survey data and found a large portion of the U.S. workforce has only a secondary training. Twenty-

five million workers in the 18 to 64 year old age group do not have a secondary school diploma or GED while another 52 million adults have practically no postsecondary education (Strawn, 2009). Estimates vary from state to state on postsecondary enrollment rates, but approximately 15 to 30% of underprepared recipients began postsecondary education (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, 2013). Percentages were obtained by comparing the college entrance Testing Services International Database (IDB) to college entrance records (the College, 2013). According to the NCAL (2010), “postsecondary education and training typically does not coordinate, dual enroll, or align services with adult education in the way that it increasingly does with high schools” (p. i). Adult learner classes and tests are aligned with GED preparation.

According to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2009), because K-12 education is not adequately preparing students to succeed in higher education; therefore, over 40% of students in four year colleges and 63% of undergraduate students in junior colleges are being required to take at least one remedial course prior to starting a traditional course of study. Of those undergraduate students required to take a remedial course, only a small ratio ultimately graduate. Further, advanced education graduation rates have now fallen, with a little more than 60% graduating in 6 years (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2009). Many underprepared adult students on college preparation and entrance need to refresh their reading, writing, and comprehension skills, so the adult learners who do pursue postsecondary education are then tested back into the remediation cycle. This can be costly for the student in time and money. Many colleges do not allow students in

remedial classes to take college level classes until the remedial classes are completed.

Once adult low-skilled learners have entered postsecondary education the next issue of importance is retention. How many adult learners persist toward completion of a postsecondary certificate or degree? I believe that by combining technology with an English and literacy curriculum, learners can think critically; work collaboratively; learn problem solving skills; apply negotiating techniques; and use computers, to investigate how information can be researched and presented. These skills could be fundamental to the development of learning and functioning in society.

The Adult Literacy Program for First Year Traditional College Students

Evaluation research, a form of applied research, (Chen, 1996; Scriven & Coryn, 2008; Sparks & Malkus, 2008; Spaulding, 2008) “collects data on the worth or value of a program, process, or technique” (Merriam, 2009, p. 4). The adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College integrating technology into the current program component does not have preestablished standards or criteria for the program and has never been evaluated to assess its curriculum to evaluate its alignment with standards specific to higher education (S. B., personal communication, February 10, 2012; J. C., personal communication, February 19, 2013; H. C., personal communication, February 9, 2012; N. J., personal communication, February 10, 2013). Based on the criterion descriptions and current knowledge about the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College, a summative evaluation of the adult literacy program that used the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and

Universities C Section IV (2010) external and internal accountability would be the appropriate approach to take for this study.

Successful Adult Literacy Programs

Although there are a number of studies on evaluation of adult literacy programs, a thorough review of the literature specifically addressing evaluation of the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students includes the following: Alliance for Excellent Education (2012), Bifuh-Ambe (2011), Carnevale (2012), CHEA (2010), Higher Education Research & Development (2006), and Georgetown College (2012). The Higher Education Research & Development (2006) study focused specifically on evaluation, assessment, and academic quality of adult learning programs to guarantee that students are provided with opportunities to gain the literacy abilities needed to support their learning needs that will support them academically, socially, and economically. The results of a meta-analysis (CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV 2010; HERD, 2006) of 4 year college and university adult literacy programs provided data of the effectiveness of adult literacy program evaluations using a qualitative approach. The adult literacy program evaluations (CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities et al., 2010) found 24 adult literacy programs targeting four year colleges and universities that met their measures criteria of evaluating the quality of programs for effectiveness at least once a month. Program evaluation provides the education dean, faculty, and others with evidence which could produce useful information about programs, course content, and students. The evaluation of the

current adult literacy program could help to make decisions about program quality, effectiveness, and student learning and development.

The NAEP and the U.S. Department of Education sets policies for NCLB (2001) and secondary education programs and is responsible for developing the framework and test specifications. The Community College Research Center (2011) focused studies on the need to expand and improve adult education and literacy. Dias (1999), Fletcher (2009), and Goldstein and Perin (2008) focused on increased emphasis on cooperation between faculty, tutors, mentors, and librarians to create a connection between the education program and the library. Herman and Gomez (2009) explored different methods of delivering instruction: lectures, tours, manuals, and integrated instruction. Lloyd and Williamson (2008) speculated that little research exists regarding adult education and adult literacy programs.

Impact of Technology in Teaching and Learning

Research conducted by Hutchison and Reinking (2011) indicated that student achievement, as measured by academic performances, is positively impacted by integrating communications technologies (ICTs) into literacy instruction. Whereas, students whom participated in a literacy intervention that integrated technology progressed at a higher range than those whom did not participate. The use of the ICTs provided learners with autonomy, including skills for self-assessment and tracking progress. It was also helpful in strengthening the knowledge base through research and to provide feedback of activities effectively (Looney, 2008). The literacy intervention better enhanced student interests and capabilities in the areas of reading, and cognitive abilities

that help adults develop not only literacy but social skills which may promote success in their everyday lives (Massengil, 2010). The adult literacy intervention may ultimately contribute to students succeeding academically. Student achievement results are almost always positively impacted through guided reading instruction and curricula that implements technology when teaching low-literate adults (Massengil, 2010). Combining reading instruction by text and technology students may exponentially grow in their knowledge and skills.

Conclusion

Current research has shown that careful and continuous monitoring of an adult literacy program could enable stakeholders to develop effective strategies to teach reading and writing while addressing students' learning problems. The conceptual framework for this study is Knowles's (1984) adult learning theory, which addresses andragogy and self-directed learning based on four assumptions, including transformation through experiences, specific learning needs, tasks approach to skills, and history of past experiences. Based on social constructivism and adult learning theory, the goal of this program evaluation is to measure the effectiveness of curriculum in the current adult literacy program.

The conceptual framework tied together with the review of literature helped me to describe, summarize, evaluate, and clarify, the literature used to support the study. Additionally, I reviewed books as well as articles from peer-reviewed journals, with a focus on studies related to evaluating adult learning, adult language and literacy programs, successful adult literacy programs, and the use of technology interventions in

literacy programs. I used these books and peer-reviewed journals to investigate and to determine if the use of technology in literacy programs changed the ways students learned, and or created a social impact.

Implications

The main implication derived from this study relates to the two identified categories of the new adult literacy curriculum. First, if the objective of the adult literacy intervention is to improve the learners' English and literacy skills, the effort could be undertaken by Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Instruction (ASE) . According to Burt, Peyton, and Schaetzel (2008), ABE and ASE instruction both help learners enhance their oral and literacy abilities in English and to achieve other goals related to workforce preparation, family or further education. Second, if the objective of the adult literacy intervention is improvement in English language proficiency and literacy skills, the implications are fairly straightforward: the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College interventions should first focus on literacy development through the use of appropriate material and technology. The integration of literacy and technology has become the focus of a reformed program throughout the course of incoming first year traditional college students at the College. It is critically important to have in-depth knowledge about adult students and the integration of literacy and technology, there is a limit to what can be learned by reading books alone (Chao, 2015). Therefore, having discussions or simulated classroom activities along with using combinations of adult learner techniques and strategies, adult educators, facilitators, mentors, professors, or trainers could create training experiences that will

improve the learning of participants. The Executive Summary for the program evaluation (see Appendix A) includes the newly designed technology based adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College, which I recommend based on the findings of this project study. Section 3 provides project goals and a description of the technology based adult literacy program.

Research findings influenced by the work of Piaget (1972), indicated the need for further research on effective instructional strategies for adult English language learners; particularly learners with limited literacy (Mathews-Aydinli, 2008; Tarone, Bigelow, & Hansen, 2007). It is possible that until students reach a threshold of language proficiency, explicit instruction in reading will not be helpful. Therefore, teachers who facilitate learner motivation will need to find out what learners needs are and take this into account in designing instruction. The intent in identifying the learner's needs is to recognize and develop an understanding of each individual varying background, knowledge, language, interest, and learning style in the same class which enables me to better assist the student/s in the learning process.

Beasley and Pearson (2006) studied international first and second year students making a transition to an Australian college campus. Student attrition led to academic failure due to the undeveloped curriculum design. The underdeveloped curriculum design lacked the integration of appropriate language and learning skills with course content. Curriculum redesign promoting collaboration, independence and reflection, can potentially benefit all students, especially low literacy adult students (Beasley & Pearson, 2006).

Summary

Student's English language proficiency can be affected throughout adulthood by the former print dominated classroom. However, research has shown that a literacy intervention integrating technology will help to increase adult student achievement and prepare the first year college student to become college and career ready. Literature on the impact of English language proficiency, self-efficacy, student attrition, and lack of faculty preparation will actively contribute to diminished academic achievement. The local problem identified by this study will add to the collection of data that informs school leaders of external and internal factors contributing to low literacy disparity and why the ratio of students are dropping out of school. In Section 1 of this project study, I described the local problem, rationale, and significance supported by the guiding research questions. Section 2 included a detailed account of the program evaluation using a qualitative approach to explore the in-depth perceptions held by students and teachers when exploring the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College. In Section 3, I describe the Evaluation Report which will include an introduction to the evaluation, rationale for the project, a literature review of recent scholarly and academic sources, a time frame of implementation with descriptions of needed resources for completion, and final implications of the project. Finally, in Section 4, I address my final reflections and conclusions regarding the program evaluation.

Section 2: Methodology

Introduction

In this study, a program evaluation using the qualitative approach was used to evaluate the current adult literacy program being offered at the College for first year traditional college students. Focus group discussions with first year traditional college students enrolled in the adult literacy course and one-on-one interviews with instructors teaching the adult literacy course identified the first year traditional college students' and faculty perceptions about the current adult literacy program. First year traditional college students experiencing low literacy skills often times need introductory literacy course work to bring their skills up to a satisfactory level to succeed in the standard college curriculum. At a time when college programs are under attack from legislative cost cutting, many colleges have limited funds to develop and maintain adult literacy programs for first year traditional college students. Therefore, universities that do not have funding to create and maintain an adult literacy program will simply use a program created for nontraditional adults, which may not meet the needs for first year traditional college students.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

According to Bennett (2009) and Brown-Urban and Trochim (2009), assessment and evaluation of program services provides an opportunity for growth and improvement. Therefore, an assessment and evaluation of the current adult literacy program at the College is essential to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum intended to improve student achievement in English and literacy. Through summative evaluation, this project

study is an exploration of the extent to whether the adult literacy program offered met current college needs. Summative evaluation helps determine to what degree the instructional and learning objectives have been met (Scriven, 2010). The literature review addressed the impact on a program that evaluation and assessment has in creating accountability, academic quality, monitoring progress, planning for change, developing and sustaining activities that promote actual change, and improving programs (Bennett, 2009). This study was guided by three research questions:

RQ1: What are the faculty, education dean, and program education coordinator's perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College?

RQ2: What are first year traditional college students' perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College?

RQ3: Is the current curriculum in line with the standards of the CHEA?

The first two research questions addressed administrators, faculty, and students' perceptions about the current adult literacy program offered at the college. The third research question addressed whether or not the current adult literacy program offered by the College is compliant with the standards set forth by the Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C section IV (2010). CHEA Professional Standards C Section IV identified the strengths of the services in programs while serving to recognize gaps in practices and resources, and the importance of learning outcomes (see Appendix B).

Description of the Qualitative Tradition

The research design for this program study was a program evaluation using a qualitative approach that was supplemented with data driven from the measurements and requirements of the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010). Program evaluations using a qualitative approach are quite useful for evaluation and have been used extensively in educational settings for in-depth examination of programs, events, or processes (Creswell, 2009; Glesne, 2011; Kazdin, 2009; Merriam, 2009). Creswell (2009) further stated that if limited information exists to understand the topic chosen for the study then a qualitative design is the best approach. According to Yin (2011), a qualitative approach is a research strategy that focuses on understanding complex phenomena's emphasizing words and interpretation rather than the quantification of data and when applied correctly it is most appropriate in evaluating programs and interventions.

Glesne (2011) stated that the nature of qualitative evaluation is to accentuate complexity, this is an unusual method to allow the researcher to dig deeper into a program and discover valuable unquantifiable practices to achieve desirable goals and outcomes. Although outcome criteria (standards) may be the same amongst adult literacy programs, the method or process to meet those outcomes may be different. Case studies focus on in-depth examination of one or multiple bounded cases (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2010). Case studies examine people, programs, or processes to gain a deeper understanding of the situation (Lodico et al, 2010). This qualitative approach was the most logical approach based on the outcome that I was trying to achieve.

Justification of the Choice of Research Design

The program evaluation using a qualitative approach “allows the researcher to explore individuals or organizations, simple through complex interventions, relationships, communities, or programs and supports the deconstruction and the subsequent reconstruction of various phenomena” (Yin, 2003, p. 3). A qualitative design is most appropriate because it is useful in answering the nature of the how question and it allows the use of multiple techniques for data gathering, including observations; interviews; and at times; the examination of artifacts and documents, and provides a broader perspective and reduces bias (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Additionally, genuine insights, feelings, and perceptions of the participants in a study can be uncovered in a qualitative design (Lodico et al., 2010). In order to answer the research questions posed, a qualitative program evaluation using a qualitative approach allowed me to obtain perceptions about the adult literacy program at the College.

This evaluation was an in-depth inquiry of the adult literacy program component that had not been previously evaluated. In this qualitative program evaluation using a qualitative approach, variables were not manipulated, which is in contrast to a typical quantitative evaluation that tends to emphasize hypotheses (McDavid, 2009). A quantitative design was initially considered, but rejected because it would not have provided the in-depth, detailed, experiential mindsets that can be gained from focus groups and one-on-one interviews. Although quantitative information was included in the evaluative process, strictly using a quantitative approach would have limited the depth and breadth of evaluation. Therefore, a program evaluation using a qualitative approach

was deemed the most appropriate for this qualitative program evaluation using a qualitative approach design.

Description of the Type of Evaluation

According to Stake (1995), program evaluation using a qualitative approach methodology is most appropriate because it serves as an operative way to collect qualitative data of lived experiences within a bounded system. Lodico et al. (2010) believed qualitative researchers come to know the participants in the study well enough to fully understand their feelings and perceptions. A program evaluation using a qualitative approach allowed for a detailed analysis of any documents that were relevant to the phenomenon as well. Yin (2003) purported that a program evaluation using a qualitative approach should be considered when: (a) the study focus is to answer “how” and “why” questions, (b) the behavior of participants cannot be manipulated, (c) you want to cover contextual conditions that could be relevant to the phenomenon being studied, or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context. Furthermore, qualitative approaches explore the participants in a particular phenomenon and suggest the insights extracted from this type of research can directly influence institution policies or procedures (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). For these reasons, this project study took place within the context of the daily operations of the College. The focus of using a qualitative evaluation method is to understand the feelings and perceptions of the first year traditional college students enrolled in the current adult literacy program. Program evaluation using qualitative approaches are most often used

because they help the researcher to understand a broader context in which program takes place (Rogers, 2013).

Summative Evaluation

The purpose of completing a summative evaluation is to judge the worth of a program at the completion of program activities, specifically to focus on program outcomes (Scriven, 2010). The adult literacy program at the College was evaluated based on nationally established criteria in this study, and the method of evaluating the program took place at the end of the program activities. A summative evaluation was used for this study.

Summative evaluation is designed to identify a project's effectiveness after a specified length of time while determining accomplishments in terms of its goals and objectives achieved (Scriven, 2010). At the conclusion, summative evaluation judges the worth, or value, of an intervention (Tyler, Gagne, & Scriven, 1967). This evaluation identified what the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students has currently achieved. Using qualitative methods of data collection provided insight into unintended ramifications and lessons for improvement. Summative evaluation is described as outcome-focused rather than being process focused (Garrison & Ehringhaus, 2007). Therefore, when completing a summative evaluation it is important to distinguish the outcome from output (Tyler et al., 1967).

Overall Program Evaluation Goals

The overall goal of this program evaluation was to establish evidence about the current quality of the adult literacy program offered for first year traditional college

students requiring remedial English and literacy skills at the College prior to taking courses in the standard curriculum. Paramount for this study was the need for the program alignment with the CHEA standards. Most importantly, the data from this study will help to assure the quality and improvement of practice and programs (Courard-Hauri, 2013; Gordon, 2012; Heathfield, 2013).

Participants

Criteria for Selecting Participants

Faculty and Administrators. The educational director, education dean, education coordinator, and faculty members who are responsible for the adult literacy department at the College were extended an invitation via e-mail asking them to participate in the evaluation process (see Appendix C). Participants were encouraged to make recommendations and/or build a case for an adult literacy program intervention. According to Royse, Thyer, and Padgett (2010), it is important to include as many stakeholder perspectives as possible. However, qualitative research typically involves only a few individuals or cases to provide an in-depth description of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). As the responsible individuals for the delivery of quality programs and student learning outcomes in the adult literacy department, the educational director, education dean, program education coordinator, and two faculty members of the adult literacy department were asked to participate in an electronic questionnaire and an additional 60-minute semistructured interview.

Students. During the 2014-2015 academic year (AY) there were 60 first year traditional college students registered in the adult literacy program at the College, and all

enrolled students were asked to participate in the study and there was 100% participation. The students enrolled in the adult literacy program were identified by the admissions department with low literacy level scores on the SAT/ACT. Student participants were selected to participate in questionnaires, focus group discussions, and one-on-one semistructured interviews.

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

A list of registered and eligible first year traditional college students enrolled in the adult literacy program at the College AY 2014-2015 were requested from the College Registrar's Office. E-mail addresses for the students were retrieved through the College's electronic contact list. To maintain confidentiality students were sent e-mails as blind carbon copy (bcc) so that their name or e-mail address never appeared to other students who received the e-mail. A list of administrators and teachers was also requested from the College's human resource department. Those individuals were contacted using the same e-mail protocol as the students. The academic status of students was important in determining the eligible traditional college participants for the study. E-mail addresses for students were retrieved through the College's database.

Methods for Establishing Researcher-Participant Relationship

As a former instructor at the College where the study took place, I have a professional relationship with the faculty members in the adult literacy program and the administrators at the College. However, since I left the College more than 5 years ago, I did not teach any of the student participants from AY 2014-2015. Through an act of professional courtesy, the exchange of consent materials and information, I established a

positive, trusting researcher-participant relationship. In addition, pseudonyms were used in the data collection coding process and all documents and recordings were secured in locked cabinets. All study data, including the study electronic files, audio tapes, and transcripts will be kept in a locked file cabinet in my office and will be destroyed 5 years after the conclusion of this research study.

Measures for Ethical Protection of Participants

Ethical issues to consider for this study was my personal role, given that I am considered to be the research instrument for data collection and maintenance confidentiality of participants. The researcher must be careful to not introduce bias and remain objective during the evaluation process (Glesne, 2011; Spaulding, 2008). The nature of this program evaluation is not designed to pose physical or emotional harm to the students, educational director, education dean, education coordinator, or faculty participants. I received approval for this study from the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB; # 02-16-15-0175990) and adhered to all of the rules of that process. A Letter of Cooperation from the Adult Literacy Program at the College (see Appendix D) defines general access to resources from the adult literacy department and was obtained from the educational director. The Letter of Cooperation also made the educational director aware that data gathered remains confidential (Merriam, 2009; Royse et al., 2010). Participants were informed of the confidentiality of their responses via informed consent, which was sent via e-mail to students (see Appendix E). I also sent a separate letter to students for their participation in the focus groups (see Appendix F). Participants were made aware that their participation was voluntary and that they could choose to withdraw from the

study at any point, and whether or not there were any risks to their safety (Glesne, 2011; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Merriam, 2009).

Data Collection Procedures

The instrumentation in this program evaluation included a number of tools in order to document the effectiveness of the adult literacy program at the College. The various instruments used to collect the data were questionnaires, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews. The primary mode of the program evaluation is the evaluation matrix, which is the “cornerstone of conducting a rigorous and successful evaluation project” (Spaulding, 2008, p. 15). The evaluation matrix consists of a set of predetermined outcomes that provided the evaluator with a blueprint of all of the necessary data for collection (Spaulding, 2008). Appendix G shows the evaluation matrix for this study. The types of interviews conducted in qualitative research case studies vary in degree of formality, from informal to semistructured to structured (Patton, 2010). According to Creswell (2009), in-depth interviews excel in providing more detailed thoughts aiming to answer the research questions. Student participants were first given an electronic questionnaire (see Appendix H) to identify their perceptions about the effectiveness of the current adult literacy program. At the end of the questionnaire, students were asked to participate in focus group discussions (see Appendix H). Three focus group sessions with students were conducted, two face-to-face sessions, and one online session, to identify students’ perceptions about the current adult literacy program at the College. Prior to the interviews, open-ended questionnaires delved into administrators’ and faculty perceptions on the current adult literacy program at the College (see Appendix J). Because this study

dealt with participants' perceptions about the current adult literacy program, the interviews were semistructured, consisting of five open-ended questions to administrators and faculty (see Appendix K), allowing them the freedom to elaborate on their interpretation of the problem and express their opinion.

Description and Justification for Data Choices

According to Merriam (2009), in a qualitative study, "data analysis and data collection occur simultaneously" (p. 171). Yin (2009) also emphasized that a qualitative research design is the "logic that links data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of the study" (p. 24). Qualitative research differs from quantitative research in data collection procedures (Creswell, 2012). I collected data from relevant documents, focus group interviews, one-on-one interviews, responses from student participants, and faculty participants. The interview technique helped me to get the best possible responses by creating a positive relationship with the person with whom I spoke and developed rapport to encourage further discussion. Finally, it is important that the evaluation technique was used to evaluate the students' behavior towards the current adult literacy program. I favored this approach because it gave me the opportunity to explore the scene and to accurately record the flow of interaction. Surveys and pre and posttests were used as statistical methods, etc., but did not in themselves tell anything about the real action that took place in the classroom and other arenas. To gain insight into group perspectives and program outcomes triangulation is often used by qualitative researchers to validate data collection (Glesne, 2011). These qualitative data were gathered and triangulated from multiple qualitative methods: Documents provided by the

school, focus group interviews, participant questionnaires, and individual interviews with faculty. The following sections explain the multiple sources I used to gather and triangulate qualitative data.

Questionnaires

Following informed consent in an informational e-mail (see Appendix F and Appendix H), an open-ended electronic questionnaire was administered through Survey Monkey software for the participants (see Appendix I): students and (see Appendix J) administrators and faculty, respectively. The online software program allowed each participant to respond to the questionnaire. Access to the online open-ended questionnaire was gained from the participants through a link that was provided by me via e-mail. Participants were given 14 days to respond.

Responses from the student questionnaire (see Appendix I, L, and M) regarding the current adult literacy program was stored on the researcher's computer and password protected. A backup copy was maintained on a flash drive and kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home office. All data will be kept for 5 years upon completion of this study and then will be destroyed. Completed questionnaires were submitted to a secure online database resource, which is password protected and accessible only to me.

The faculty and administrators of the adult literacy program were asked to respond to an electronic questionnaire (see Appendix J and L) which identified their perception about first year traditional college students' experiences in the current adult literacy program. All administrator responses were stored electronically on my computer and password protected. A backup copy was maintained on a flash drive and kept in a

locked file cabinet in my home office. Data will not be kept for a period longer than 5 years upon completion of this study.

The questionnaires addressed RQ1, RQ2 and RQ3 and sought the students, faculty, along with administration and faculty's perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College. The questionnaires provided a clear understanding of in-depth responses from the first year traditional college students on how the current adult literacy program have or have not met their needs. Research did not involve merging any of the data sets in a manner that individuals might be identified.

Focus Group Interviews

The focus groups were divided into three sessions to accommodate student participants' schedules-- two face-to-face and one online. In order to generate rich discussion, a small face-to-face focus group of six to 10 participants is best when applying the qualitative approach (Glesne, 2011). This approach was followed for the first session, which was held electronically. In an attempt of getting a more representative sample the two face-to-face sessions consisted of 10 or more participants. A scheduled date, time, and location for the focus group meeting was predetermined prior to contacting potential participants. Participants enrolled in the adult literacy program, including those who represented the online population of the program at the College, selected the time slot that best fit their schedule for the focus group interviews (see Appendix F). According to Marczak and Sewell (2008) and Rennekamp (2008), focus group interviews typically last from 60 to 90 minutes, which was the timeframe used for

this focus group. The focus group questions centered on the students' perceptions about the adult literacy program (see Appendix I and M).

The first focus group session was held electronically using Adobe Connect, with a total of eight participants (five females and three males). Adobe Connect web conferencing software offers web meeting experiences from small group collaboration to substantial webinars (Hewitt, 2014). Moreover, the web conferencing software allowed participants to interact and contribute to comments during the focus group discussion. The second focus group had 35 participants (22 females and 13 males), and the third focus group included 17 participants (10 females and 7 males). The second and third focus group sessions were conducted face-to-face (ftf) at the selected college facility. The ages of participants ranged from 18-22 years old. Online focus groups allowed participants to gather electronically for a more representative sample (Lindlof, 2009). At the end of each focus group session, student participants were asked if they wanted to participate in semistructured interviews.

The focus group interview data collected addressed the following research question: (RQ3): What are first year traditional college students' perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the college? The interviews addressed how the adult literacy program might customize the curriculum to better fit the needs of the first year traditional college students at the College. Krueger (2000) and Morgan (1997) have suggested that three to six distinct focus groups are sufficient to reach data saturation and/or theoretical saturation, with each group meeting

once or as many times possible. Three focus group sessions were held to collect and review data rising from groups.

Semistructured Interviews

All interview questions were embedded within the study's research objectives reflecting the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010) national standards for program evaluation (Creswell, 2012). Additional data collected was justified by the research questions, the evaluation dimensions, and criteria from Sections I and II of the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010; see Appendix B). To fully explore in and to adequately address every research question, I created written interview protocols (see Appendices H and J) for all interviewees' privacy (Creswell, 2007). To ensure accuracy, following transcription participants were given a copy of the transcript for review and changes were made if required (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). All audio recordings and transcripts will be detained for 5 years and then deleted and destroyed as soon as the actual research period expires. (Creswell, 2007).

Student interviews. A list of registered and eligible first year traditional college students who are currently enrolled in the adult literacy program at the College was requested from the Registrar's office. Access to the students e-mail addresses was obtained through the College's electronic e-mail list. According to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA; 2014) an e-mail note from a student's @college.edu e-mail address satisfies FERPA's written consent requirement. Students' must log into the college's e-mail system only and provide electronic signature to satisfy

security measures. Upon receipt of the student consent forms the student's education records may be disclosed. E-mail addresses for the students were retrieved through the College's electronic contact list. To maintain confidentiality students were sent e-mails as bcc so that their name or e-mail address never appeared to other students receiving the e-mail. A list of education deans and teachers was requested from the College's human resource department. Those individuals were contacted using the same e-mail protocol as the students.

Administrative and faculty interviews. The education director, education dean, education coordinator, and faculty were contacted via e-mail to request their participation in the study. Upon verbal agreement I facilitated a satisfactory time and date for the interview. Methods for establishing a satisfactory time and date for the researcher, educational director, education dean, faculty, and education coordinator consisted of e-mail correspondence and the initiation of a meeting invitation through the Microsoft Outlook Express calendar. The staff participants were asked to sign the informed consent document at the beginning of the meeting. A review of the literature indicated that establishing rapport with the participants is essential component for the researcher (Creswell, 2008; Glesne, 2011). Because of the nature of the qualitative research, close contact with the participants was chosen. Lodico et al. (2010) suggested that the researcher must to some degree become part of the culture that is being investigated. The interviewees were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and written informed consent would be obtained. I explained that the interview would be recorded for data analysis purposes. I took detailed field notes and explained to the participants that

information would be kept confidential and participation was fully voluntary. I informed the faculty interviewees that the interview would (a) be audio recorded, (b) last between 60 and 90 minutes, and (c) field notes would be taken. A pop-up reminder with a link to complete the questionnaire was e-mailed to all participants 5 days after the initial request.

Participants were made aware that the research is a collaborative effort and that participation is voluntary as iterated in the informed consent letter and prior to the interview. Full disclosure to participants describing the purpose and intent of the study was shared. The interview technique helped to obtain the best possible responses by creating a positive relationship with the individuals with whom I spoke and developed rapport to encourage further discussion. A relaxed and welcoming atmosphere was established for the participants setting allowing minimal distractions. I assured participants that questions on the student questionnaire and those asked of the program education coordinator, two faculty members, and two administrators allowed everyone to participate in the discussion and answer freely. As part of the interview process, I demonstrated using active listening skills by acknowledging responses of interviewed participants. I made sure to consider the participants' time was valued. Confidentiality is the process of protecting an individual's privacy; therefore, reassurance of confidentiality was reiterated by removing identifiers during the final analysis process that connected responses to participants.

Documents. It is customary for the researcher to request a letter indicating that access will be provided from the gatekeeper at the College (D. T., personal communication, February 10, 2014). I requested a letter from the educational director to

collect student records (e.g., audiotapes, student grades, student achievements, and satisfaction reports), provided by the college to investigate patterns of the past first year traditional college students and their perceptions of the current adult literacy program, with the intent of conducting research. The adult literacy program for underprepared learners is taught at small, four-year urban college in the northeast as part of a grant-funded program. The state required quarterly reports of information to collect critical data necessary to evaluate the adult literacy program at the College. These reports include the Student Information Report and the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), with assistance from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) Quarterly Status Reports. The Student Information Report is a website based living document created by Acrobat Labs for the state that the College resides in grant partnerships that covers information the state department requires of the partnerships. The CAEL partnered with assistance from the NCHEMS Quarterly Status Reports are hard copy reports that relay data to any state based on the goals and objectives set forth by the target college program in order to obtain the grant partnership. The first quarter report covered February 2013 to July 2013, the second quarterly report covered August 2013 to December 2013, the third quarter involved the months of January 2014 to March 2014, and the last of the four quarterly reports covers April 2014 to June 2014. Both of these documents were submitted to the Center for Law and Social Policy. The NCHEMS, in partnership with the College Level Academic Skills Program (CLASP), set out to investigate the college-completion agenda that is taking into account

the reason that higher education produces both private and public financial benefits and in this manner empowers economic prosperity.

Type of Data Most Appropriate

According to Creswell (2008), “an interview protocol is a form designed by the researcher that contains instructions for the process of the interview” (p. 233). This particular form is used by the researcher to help facilitate the research. Data collection consisted of interviews from focus group participants dedicated to the current adult literacy program. Evaluations were conducted in two classrooms. An audio recording device was used to ensure accuracy and to capture all important information. Field notes were taken, and data were transcribed and member checked for validation and accuracy (Creswell, 2012). Once the transcript had been approved by the interviewee and me, I reviewed the data for general understanding. The transcripts were also reviewed for common themes and suggestions between interviewees. A thorough discussion of the themes and their interpretations in the form of a narrative are included. Coding the data encompassed looking for broad themes and reviewing the field notes and transcripts. The primary objective of coding is to make sense out of the data by organizing them into categories (Creswell, 2008).

Data Tracking Systems. A Microsoft Excel worksheet was created for tracking and cross-referencing data and themes. Microsoft document folders were created to store documents retrieved from online sources. Paper resources retrieved for evaluation were electronically scanned for storage in the online document folder. Folders were named based on the type of documents being stored (i.e., annual reports). All folders were kept

confidential and password protected. The password was held only by me and a backup copy of all the data was kept on a zip drive and stored in a locked file cabinet in my home office. All data and backup copies will be kept for 5 years upon completion of the study.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, I was careful to not introduce bias and remained objective during the evaluation process (Glesne, 2011; Spaulding, 2008). Participants were informed of the confidentiality of their responses via written informed consent, which was sent via e-mail for student participants. I formerly held a position of admissions advisor for the College. I do not have any authority or governing power within the adult literacy department. As a former admissions advisor, I have worked cooperatively and satisfactorily with all of the College's education departments. I do not have any past or current involvement with the participants.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted as the data were being collected during the 2015 spring term. According to Merriam (2009), "the much preferred way to analyze data in a qualitative study is to do it simultaneously with data collection" (p. 171). Refinements, on the other hand, may be made to data analysis until the study has been accepted (Glesne, 2011; Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009). The following data analysis techniques were used in this evaluation and are consistent with program evaluation using a qualitative approach.

Transcriptions. Comments from faculty, administrators, and student participants were requested to address the effectiveness of the current adult literacy program during

the group interview process. All comments received from staff and student participants addressing the effectiveness of the current adult literacy program were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Transcribing verbatim helped in minimizing my bias and distortion of comments (Lodico et al., 2010). Additionally, transcribing the comments verbatim and entering the data on the computer in a Microsoft Word document aided in analyzing the frequency of key words and sorting data. Emergent themes developed through a systematic process of sorting and classifying methods consistent with qualitative research.

Transcripts were analyzed by distinguishing and coding any lump of content that represented a unique theme that illustrated the range of the meanings of the research questions (Hsieh & Shannon, 2012). Techniques that were used for analyzing the transcript for thematic development were incorporated searching for repetitious use of phrases in addition to comparing the relevant frequency of ideas and themes of the questions (Creswell, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2012; Lodico et al., 2010). Data collection and analysis was conducted using a small number of participants purposefully chosen from the College. To probe participants' responses, perceptions, and practices, I used an interview format consisting of open-ended questions, typical of a qualitative research methodology (Warren & Karner, 2009). The purpose of the preliminary survey was to gather descriptive data and learn about the participants' backgrounds. I used this information as a guide to identify those students who are traditional college students or transfer students, level of literacy skills, and who are between the ages of 18-22. In

addition, faculty information was used to identify faculty patterns, and practices in the current adult literacy program at the College.

The collection of these data helped to measure the effectiveness of the current adult literacy program on student academic progress over time in relation to preestablished standards and to close the gaps of learning outcomes between students who had enrolled in the current adult literacy program opposed to those who had not. I used this information as a guidance to identify those students who are first year traditional college students. In order to maintain students' anonymity, I used a number to identify each participant. The goal of this study was to measure the level of the participants' satisfaction with the program.

Evidence of Quality

Lodico et al. (2010) confirmed there are various strategies that qualitative researchers can employ to assure reliability and validity. Using the first group of the data analysis, I evaluated the initial insights collected from the interviews by comparing, coding, and crosschecking the emerging findings. Existing data addressed participant responses related to the criteria used to identify and measure each row of the dimensions in CHEA Professional Standards Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010; see Appendix B). Evidence of quality, trustworthiness, and procedures for assuring credibility was used through the application of triangulation of multiple data sources, use of purposeful sampling, and use of rich descriptive writing (Creswell, 2008; Glesne, 2011; Lodico et al., 2010; Shenton, 2004). Secondly, I recorded and transcribed all interview discussions. As suggested by Creswell (2008), I organized the data

categorically and chronologically, as I reviewed and coded it repeatedly. I used NVivo 10 software to engage in further analysis.

Triangulation. Triangulation addresses credibility by using more than one method of data collection (Glesne, 2011; Lodico et al., 2010). Triangulation of data involves the comparing and cross referencing of multiple data sources checking for the consistency of the information (Glesne, 2011; Shenton, 2004). The consistency of the data from multiple sources increases the credibility of the study. The data gathered from archival records, focus group interviews, and questionnaires were triangulated by the evaluator to classify and group data using general themes to answer the evaluator's questions.

Member checks. To ensure that the my own bias did not influence the results, member checks were used in which to transcribe interviews of the focus group participants. Member checking, which is also referred to as respondent feedback or respondent validation was used to check the credibility and validity of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2008; Merriam, 2009). In the member checking process, the participants were asked to review a written summary of the data analysis from the interview. The participants were asked to convey feedback and remarks regarding whether the analysis reflects their perspective (Creswell, 2008; Knox & Burkard, 2009). A follow-up interview was conducted near the end of the research project when the analyzed data and report was given to the participants to review for the accuracy of the work. The rationale for choosing the above program evaluation strategies such as

member checking and returning analysis to participants for confirmation was chosen because of its liberal approach (Creswell, 2008).

Evaluation Limitations

The findings of this study are limited to the local setting. The results of this study are limited to the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College located in northeastern United States and cannot be generalized to adult literacy programs for first year traditional college students at other colleges. The willingness to reply to the online questionnaire could have limited the actual number of students, faculty, and education dean who agreed to participate but did not. The current adult literacy program being offered for first year traditional college students at the College has not emerged an evaluation as far back as 11 years. Therefore, the literature review has presented limited evidence of theory based evaluation in an adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College (D. T., personal communication, February 10, 2013).

Study Delimitations

This study was limited to the evaluation of the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College in its compliance with the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010) rigorous program standards for colleges and universities. I evaluated the adult literacy program in its entirety. An assumption was made that if services were in alignment with the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010) that program could have the potential to produce positive outcomes.

Outcomes

The local problem identified that a traditional teacher-led instruction, appears to leave the first year traditional college students unfulfilled. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What are the faculty, education dean, and program education coordinator's perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College?

RQ2: What are first year traditional college students' perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College?

RQ3: How is the current curriculum in line with the standards of the CHEA?

Results of the student questionnaire indicate the adult literacy component does not meet students' literacy needs and is not aligned with the CHEA professional standards. The evidence consists of comments and 'chunks' of text that correspond to the themes used in this evaluation. As an example, responses from the student questionnaire #5, "Technological tools can make the process of writing easier" correspond to Theme 2, technology intervention. Documents containing data related to the adult literacy program (test scores, audits, etc.) reveal that the adult literacy program component does not meet the standards set forth by CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010). An example of not meeting alignment is found in the required standards of programs of criterion number 1, which requires that the adult literacy program accreditation standards viably address the quality of the institution or program in

the following areas: (a) success with respect to student achievement (b) curricula (c) faculty and (d) facilities, equipment, and supplies. The evaluation presented direct evidence of best practices not met of the adult literacy program. Integrating technology into the adult literacy program is an emerging effort to facilitate literacy skills, the exchange of information, and student engagement. As an adult literacy assessment tool technology could be used as an effective tool to provide immediate access to student progress, data for faculty, and to measure program effectiveness of the adult literacy program and plan program improvement.

Data Analysis Results

The Process by which Data was Generated, Gathered, and Recorded

The purpose of this qualitative project study was to examine the effectiveness of the current adult literacy program being used as a remedial program at a 4-year urban college in the northeast. The College has been using a traditional teacher led, text-based adult literacy program for first year traditional college students, which does not appear to meet their needs. As part of Walden's IRB approval process for collecting data, a signed Letter of Cooperation to conduct the study was received from the educational director. Following permission to conduct the study, a list of student participants currently enrolled AY 2014-2015 in the adult literacy department was requested from the Registrar's office. Access to e-mail addresses for students was retrieved via e-mail through the College's electronic system, and a request for each student's participation in the study was gained.

Additionally, students were sent e-mails as bcc so that their name or e-mail address did not appear to other students who received the e-mail. A list of teachers and the administrators were requested from the College's human resource department and those individuals were contacted using the same e-mail protocol as the students. Upon consent of faculty and student participants, a link via Survey Monkey to open ended questionnaires was sent to all participants (see Appendix H and J). These questionnaire responses were not linked to participants. Following acceptance, a mutually agreed upon time and date was arranged to participants who provided their e-mail address for further contact. A pop-up reminder with a link to complete the questionnaire was e-mailed to all participants 5 days after the initial request

Once the questionnaires were returned, one-on-one interviews were scheduled, which took an average of 45 minutes to complete. Once they concluded, the audio recordings were transcribed into written text using a Microsoft Word document followed by inputting the information into NVivo 10 software for further analysis by the researcher. Prior to data analysis, member checks were used to verify the accuracy of the transcribed participant responses (see Appendix H, I, J, K, L, and M). In the member checking process the participants reviewed the transcripts and affirmed that the summaries reflected their views, feelings, and experiences in regards to the current adult literacy program. Themes were identified and developed using the constant comparison method that is based in grounded theory research (Creswell, 2009; Glesne, 2011). The three major themes that emerged are:

- Theme 1: Reform of instructional program

- Theme 2: Technology intervention
- Theme 3: Enhancing student learning through assessment

The staff comments reflected that they perceived that there is a need to improve the quality and effectiveness of the current adult literacy program. Some remarked that additional training and preparation was needed to ensure that faculty was technologically efficient to successfully incorporate the best tools in the program, if they are to narrow the achievement gap. The following steps describe what occurred after the e-mail invitations were sent to gain staff and student participants consent.

Administrators/Faculty

Step 1. Interested administrators and faculty of the adult literacy department contacted me through the contact e-mail address provided in the invitation and expressed their interest to participate in: (a) the project study entitled, *Program Evaluation of an Adult Literacy Program for First Year Traditional College Students*, (b) one-on-one interviews, and (c) member checks.

Step 2. Administrators and faculty who agreed to participate provided their contact name. Those individuals were sent a Faculty Consent Form (Appendix I) via e-mail by me. The consent form also informed the participants that the interview would take no longer than 60 minutes. In addition, the participants were notified that the interview would be audio recorded and field notes would be taken. I reiterated that the information would be kept confidential, and participation was fully voluntary. Upon receipt of the signed Administrator/Faculty Consent Form, the administrators and faculty agreed on a time and date to meet via Microsoft Outlook Express calendar for one on one

interviews. An interview at a mutually agreed time was then arranged. The administrator and faculty interviews took no longer than 40 minutes. At the conclusion of each interview, the audio recordings and written field notes were transcribed for analysis.

Students

Step 1. Upon receipt of the signed Letter of Cooperation and Agreement from the university, the students were sent an informed consent form using the same e-mail protocol as the administrators/faculty (see Appendix C). Upon receipt, of the signed Student Consent Form, those registered students were e-mailed a questionnaire supported by a link via Survey Monkey that asked for their participation in the study. At the end of the online open ended questionnaire participants were asked to participate in a focus group discussion to gather further data (RQ3). Additionally, interviews and focus group discussions, participants were asked to complete an anonymous follow up questionnaire that asked participants for feedback on the study and for demographic information (see Appendices H and I). The student participants were given 14 days to respond. To increase the response rate a reminder was e-mailed to all participants 5 days after the initial request. Fortunately, the responses from all student participants were received within a 4 day period from the initial request.

Step 2. Focus group participants were placed into three groups based on their meeting availability. The first focus group session was conducted electronically using Adobe Connect, with student participants enrolled in the on-line adult literacy program.

Participants representing the population of interest and were enrolled in the online adult literacy program took part in an online focus group sessions. Participants were

asked to provide comments and or suggestions at the end of the questionnaire about the adult literacy program. The second and third focus group sessions were conducted face-to-face at the selected college facility. The group's discussion was audio-recorded, and detailed notes were taken and transcribed for analysis purposes. All participants were asked to convey feedback and remarks regarding whether the analysis reflected their perspective (Creswell, 2008; Knox & Burkard, 2009). In addition, a follow up interview was arranged for all interviewee's to review for authenticity of the data collected. All of the study participants (i.e., 60 first year traditional college students, the education director, education dean, program education coordinator, and two faculty members) participants of the adult literacy program, names were kept in a secure file protected by me.

Statements from the narratives of the participants were analyzed and interpreted. These statements were determined to be reflections of the themes that addressed the Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 (e.g., reform of instructional program; technology intervention; changes in student learning; assessment of the current adult literacy program and comparison of the study participant responses). Statements from the interview transcripts were also aligned with the review of field notes, and transcripts along with documentation containing data related to program effectiveness of the adult literacy program and its alignment with the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and University. To ensure confidentiality of the study participants' personal identifiers were removed during the final analysis process that connected responses to participants

and replaced with study identification numbers, and only this ID number was used on study materials.

The research questions presented for this evaluation identified the benefits and challenges of the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College. Thematic coding was used in this study to analyze qualitative data. Sixty students were asked to participate in focus groups and received questionnaires. In addition, two faculty members, the program education coordinator, and two administrators were asked to participate in one-on-one interviews and also received questionnaires.

Findings, Patterns, Relationships, and Themes

Using the triangulation data analysis technique, the researcher was able to complete data collection with the student, administrator, and faculty participants quickly by comparing and cross referencing of multiple data collection methods to identify emerging findings (Glesne, 2011, Helfrey, 2010, and Merriam, 2001). A total of 60 students received questionnaires, submitted responses to questionnaires, and participated in focus groups before the point of saturation was reached. Two faculty members, two administrators, and the education coordinator received questionnaires, turned the completed questionnaires in to me and participated in one-on-one interviews as additional data was uncovered and stimulated the comparison process (Holton, 2010). In addition, faculty data were used to identify faculty patterns, and practices in the current adult literacy program at the College. The point of saturation was reached by grouping similar data together and comparing the results as the interviews and questionnaires progressed.

Consistent themes and coding eventually emerged through a systematic process of sorting and classifying methods that are consistent with qualitative research.

Transcripts were analyzed by distinguishing and coding chunks of content that represented a unique theme that illustrated the range of the meanings of the research questions (Hsieh & Shannon, 2012). The data-collection methods were effective and revealed that students and faculty have similar opinions regarding the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College. After collecting open ended questionnaire responses and then seamlessly inputting the data into NVivo 10 for Windows for analysis, I coded the data revealing the themes. The analysis yielded an understanding that a technology intervention was considered by these participants to be a potentially effective tool for the enhancement of literacy program. Data were tagged to a special code to identify and describe features and attributes, and then expanded to include faculty and student perceptions regarding the adult literacy program. The themes that emerged from the data analysis include: Theme 1: Reform of instructional program, Theme 2: Technology intervention, and Theme 3: Enhancing student learning through assessment. The themes that evolved from the coding are reflected in Table 1.

Table 1

Related Themes to Guiding Research Questions

Related Themes to Guiding Research Questions	
Research Questions	Related Themes
What are the faculty, education dean and program education coordinator's perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College?	Theme 1: Reform of instructional program Theme 3: Enhancing student learning through assessment
What are first year traditional college students' perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College?	Theme 2: Technology intervention Theme 3: Enhancing student learning through assessment
How is the current curriculum in line with the standards of the CHEA?	Theme 3: Enhancing student learning through assessment

Note. Adapted from “*Program Evaluation in Practice: Core Concepts and Examples for Discussion and Analysis*,” by D. T. Spaulding, 2008, p. 19. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

The following are the research questions, the relational data findings, and discussion of the themes.

RQ1: Faculty perceptions and Theme 1. Theme 1, reform of instructional program, was derived from the faculty responses to the first research question: What are the faculty, education dean, and program education coordinator's perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College?

All faculty participants voiced concerns of the current adult literacy program. Many of the faculty members indicated that their willingness to participate in my study stemmed from wanting to engage in improving or changing the current program.

Faculty documents containing data related to program effectiveness reveal that the adult literacy program component is in partial alignment with the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and University. An example of partial alignment is found in the evaluation of Criterion Number 1, which requires that the college addresses the quality of the adult literacy program components to include: curricula, faculty, facilities, equipment, and supplies. Faculty are also in agreement that the program components mentioned are a necessity to develop and integrate technology into the adult literacy program, all of which potentially assist in the learning process. The promise of technology to improve the effectiveness of the educational system at all levels is in various stages of realization; reforming the current adult literacy program through the integration of technology in adult literacy instruction is a means to build adult students' literacy skills (Sanden & Darragh, 2011).

Administrator #1 expressed a vision for the role of technology in education to improve teaching and learning, increase access and the delivery of high-quality programs, the improvement of productive educational systems, and efficiency of student learning outcomes to registered students of the adult literacy program. According to Administrator #1, "With appropriate changes programs can improve outcomes for all learners." The evaluation presented documented evidence (see Appendix I, K, & L) that suggests that

the adult literacy department is lacking best practices, and a reform strategy appropriate of the adult literacy program.

RQ2: Students' perceptions and Theme 2. Although the focus of Research Question 2 was, What are first year traditional college students' perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College the theme technology intervention was common across all participants, student, faculty, and administrator data. All participant responses to this question showed an interest in media based curriculum rather than text-based.

Integrating technology in instruction for adult literacy learners may offer the flexibility to extend learning beyond that available in a traditional teacher led text-based instructional program and thus increase opportunities for language and literacy learning (Cummins, Brown, & Sayers, 2007). Based on current research technology is progressively used in adult literacy learning either as a supplement to teacher-mediated instruction or as the sole means of learning (Chao, 2015). According to Moore (2010), the use of technology with adult literacy learners may facilitate their progress toward proficiency in reading, writing, investigating, assessing and using information. Student #2, stated,

“The use of multimedia technologies in instruction for adult literacy learners would be an effective approach in supporting reading and writing as opposed to textbook instruction.” When asked for clarification, the same participant offered this response: “Integrating technology into the adult literacy instruction will allow the students to gain

both literacy and computer skills, resulting in many cases increased career opportunities.”

Similar to the idea of Student #2, Student #27 disclosed,

“As a visual learner, using graphics, audio, and videos is easier for me to understand.”

RQ3: Curriculum alignment and Theme 3. Theme 3, enhancing student learning through assessment, derived from the overall responses of faculty responses to the RQ3: How is the current curriculum in line with the standards of the CHEA? Faculty and administrators were given a copy of the C Section IV of CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities (2010), and asked in one-on-one interviews and questionnaires to respond to each of the criteria within the 3 sections (hereafter referred to as dimensions) which are considered to be essential program components or functions for a quality adult literacy program (see Appendix B). For reporting purposes, each participant was assigned a number to maintain confidentiality (Interview #1, Interview #2 through Interview #5).

Based on the data from the one-on-one interviews and questionnaires, the educational dean and staff participants, immediate focus in the adult literacy department is to maximize the potential of technology in adult education, given existing resources. To serve that need, professional development is offered to provide research, best practices, and resources that support integration of new technologies into literacy instruction. Faculty’s ability to communicate competently, accurately, and effectively use computer tools is necessary to how faculty can adapt their classes to make use of the

technology (Hsu, Wang, & Hamilton, 2012). Student use of technology tools can have a positive impact on learning if it is used appropriately. According to Administrator #3,

“Integrating technology into our adult literacy program is incredibly valuable for the future. We suggest that our teachers get on the ground floor and take advantage of integrating technology effectively into the classroom.” Additionally, Administrator #5, commented: “No question about it. Interactive media instruction is creating new opportunities for reading, writing, and collaborating.”

The assessment of the program demonstrated a significant impact on the adult literacy program on various areas to include: learners’ literacy skills and the adult literacy program’s compliance with the standards of the CHEA. The evaluation was conducted to document the effectiveness of the adult literacy program at the College. Comments from faculty included the following, when asked if assessment procedures were used consistently in the program:

Administrator #3 stated, “We assess the learning of our students regularly. However, I don’t think that it addresses the accrediting program evaluation requirements.” Administrator #5 said, “Program assessment is consistently needed and accountability should be met to help benefit the adult literacy program.”

The following section contains the results (on a rating scale of 1 to 3) reflecting the participants’ evaluation of program ratings from the 3 dimensions from C Section IV of CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities (2010) that are essential components for a quality adult literacy program. A rating of 1 (indicates the program standard is not met), a rating of 2 (indicates the program standard is partially met, but

needs improvement), and a rating of 3 (indicates the program standard is fully met). To determine whether the current adult literacy program meets C Section IV of CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities (2010) all five participants would need to respond to each dimension, which contains multiple criteria, with a maximum score of 3. None of the three dimensions evaluated received a rating of 3 (program standard is fully met).

Program Dimension I, Student Achievement, includes 10 criteria across the dimension and was evaluated by five staff members. Three staff members gave a rating of 1 (standard is not met), and two staff members gave a rating of 2 (partially met, but needs improvement). These results indicate that all five staff members do not feel student achievement under the current adult literacy program meets C Section IV of CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities (2010).

Program Dimension II, Evaluation Quality Dimension, includes 7 criteria across the dimension and was evaluated by the same five staff members. Three staff members gave a rating of 1 (standard is not met), and two staff members gave a rating of 2 (partially met, but needs improvement). These results indicate that all five staff members do not feel that the quality of the current adult literacy program meets C Section IV of CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities (2010).

Program Dimension III, Program Compliance includes 14 criteria across the dimension and was evaluated by the five staff members. Three staff members gave a rating of 1 (standard is not met), and two staff members gave a rating of 2 (partially met, but needs improvement). These results also indicate that all five staff members do not

feel that the institution demonstrates compliance with C Section IV of CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities (2010).

Interview and participant comments. During the interview staff participants were given the opportunity to comment and provide further clarification or explanation of their rating of any of the evaluated criteria. Section I of C Section IV, Criterion 1, of the CHEA professional standards, states that the college or institution must establish that it has standards for accreditation, and pre-accreditation, by offering quality education that is sufficiently rigorous through its programs accredits. These dimensions are part of CHEA's mission to promote quality assurance of higher education institutions and programs and are listed in Section I. When asked, RQ1: What are the faculty, education dean, and program education coordinators perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students? All staff participants of the adult literacy department agreed to Administrator #3, statement, "It is necessary that we work as a team to ensure that the adult literacy program is evaluated appropriately." Administrator #2, added: "Even in monitoring, auditing and evaluating its effectiveness or ineffectiveness, we have to consider what the learners need." Responding to the same question, Administrator #4 commented,

"We do not think that we have the resources needed to help our students improve literacy and essential skills in the adult literacy program. We do well at encouraging our students to embrace education, social change, and learning." Administrator #5 stated, "We need an intervention in the program that is designed to help eligible students acquire the literacy skills necessary to become effective parents and employees." A rating of 1

was given (indicating that the standard is not met at all or in any appreciable manner, and the program is deficient and requires extensive improvements).

Section I of C Section IV, Criterion 1a, of the CHEA professional standards refers to the college developing and using institutional standards to demonstrate its success with respect to student achievement. When asked, RQ2: What are first year traditional college students' perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College? Student #3, responded, in the focus group interview: "I spend a moderately amount of time reading, writing and working through lesson modules. I haven't seen much change in the college program than when I was in high school."

Further probing, seeking clarification of her response, the same participant offered this additional comment: "I wish there was an alternative way to improve my literacy skills." When asked the same question about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College, Student #15, indicated in the focus group interview: "I understand the modules in the program, but think that the program could give us more resources to improve learning, besides text books and the whiteboard." Student #44, commented, "The tutors, and my instructor has helped me to improve my reading, however, I would like to build my writing fluency. I think that technology can promote learning on a larger scale."

A large majority of all of the respondents agreed with the statement by student #12, "I do not have the literacy skills and abilities to complete my work. I am not satisfied with the learning outcome of the adult literacy program at the College."

Student participant #52, said,

I am an ESL student and my teacher works with me to build my literacy skills, but I think that new ways should be found for students to connect written and oral language. Sometimes I get sleepy just from following the text book alone.

Section II of C Section IV, Criterion 2c, of the CHEA professional standards addressed the compelling components for assessing and evaluating an institution or program's compliance with the agency's standards. When asked, RQ3: "How is the current curriculum in line with the standards of the CHEA, Adult literacy Administrator #2 commented, in the one-on-one interview: "As a government-funded service, the adult literacy department mission should be in alignment with the College and CHEA professional standards, otherwise accountability and values would not exist".

Although this staff participant indicated with confidence that the adult literacy department supports the College mission to meet the requirements of CHEA professional standards, the criteria rating of 1 was given (indicating that the criterion was not met), the response directly addressed the 'adult literacy program' component at the College. Further probing, seeking to clarify and confirm the accuracy of Administrator #2, response and rating, the participant offered this analysis:

Since the college along with the adult literacy department mission must be in alignment with the CHEA professional standards, our goal is to address the quality of the adult literacy program. Our department should serve as a reliable authority in regards to the quality of the education provided by the program.

When asked further questions for clarity the respondent replied, “There is a high cost of not being in compliance. We need to be in compliance so that our program is efficient”.

Additionally, adult literacy Administrators #1 and #5, described how there are a number of federal resources to help fund the adult literacy department and improve the quality of its program. When asked the same question, Administrators #1 and #5 shared similar viewpoints, giving the same criteria rating of 1 (indicating that the criterion was not met). The following comments were made by three staff members: Administrator #1: “There is a need to improve the quality of the current adult literacy program”.

Administrator #3: “I think that we are dedicated to implementing a quality program for our students in the adult literacy program and I gave the criteria the rating of 2 for meeting the guidelines of Section I of C Section IV, Criterion 1” (indicating that the criteria was partially met), but rated the overall program given the rating 1, (indicating that the criteria was not met). Administrator #4 stated, “We could do a better job of ensuring that the adult literacy program is in compliance with the CHEA professional standards.” Administrator #2 commented, “I agree.”

Overall, the staff and student participants are in concert with their respective views of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the current adult literacy program at the College. Based on the comments shared by each of the participants, similar data was compared as the interviews and questionnaires progressed. The data collected reflected that the CHEA professional standards are not being met directly through the adult literacy department and needs and there is a desire for the program to improve when it comes to serving their population of students.

Student questionnaire. Fifty-eight of the 60 responses from the student questionnaire supported the findings from the staff interviews. Student participant #47 indicated, “The text-based lessons instruction of the current adult literacy program needed an intervention.” Overall, students would like additional technology in the classroom. Student participant #27 stated, “Technology gives us a chance to interact with their classmates more and encourages collaboration.” Student perceptions of the adult literacy program effectiveness resulted in non-desirable outcomes. Two out of the 60 student respondents indicated that they did not see a problem with the adult literacy program and that it was conducive to their literacy skills and learning. According to Student #14, “I just need some help with writing, I’m making it okay in other areas.” Student #17 supported that contention; “I’m okay with the reading and writing portion of the program, I think that adult literacy program provides a complete language learning experience.” Questionnaire results also pointed to the use of implementing technology into the adult literacy program, as it would be beneficial if successfully integrated into the curriculum.

Analysis Summary

As I collected and coded the data and studied the transcribed notes, each interview added more information and themes emerged that assisted me in understanding whether a media based curriculum rather than text-based was an effective tool for teaching and learning in the program. Data were collected until no new cases developed and data collection ended. Technology is used in adult literacy classes in a multitude of ways. Some faculty use it to motivate and encourage adult learners to work in groups, for

writing and collaborating, while embracing electronic texts, which are increasingly important skills to develop, since collaboration decision making is in demand in the workplace. Others use it to influence adult learners to embrace new technologies in video and telecommunications. As I analyzed the data for this qualitative study using a qualitative approach, I reviewed patterns, summarized learning theories, and analyzed the perceptions held by students, administrators', and faculty regarding the current program. Fifty-eight of the 60 students agreed that the current adult literacy program does not meet their current needs, and could benefit from a change.

Evidence of Quality to Address Accuracy of the Data

Evidence of quality to assure accuracy of the data was obtained through the triangulation of multiple sources, use of purposeful sampling, use of a preestablished instrument, and use of rich clear composition. Through triangulation of focus group interviews, the evaluation of questionnaire responses, one-on-one interviews, and other data I increased the credibility of the findings. Furthermore, member checking was conducted to help improve the accuracy, credibility, and validity by asking each participant interviewed to check the summary of the data gathered from the interview (Creswell, 2008; Glesne, 2011; Lodico et. al., 2010; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). The data that were gathered and triangulated from multiple qualitative methods (i.e., documents provided by the school, focus group interviews, participant questionnaires, and individual interviews with faculty) were effective and revealed that student and faculty participants had more similar opinions than opposed regarding the effectiveness of the current adult literacy program. The following section explains the outcomes of the results.

Procedures for Dealing with Discrepant Cases

During the analysis process I looked for evidence of discrepancy in the data. Evidence of discrepant cases is data that are inconsistent with the themes. Discrepant cases were assessed for relevancy by frequency and consistency of the data collected. Discrepant cases are documented in the descriptive analysis (Creswell, 2009; Maggin, Briesch, Chafouleas, Ferguson, & Clark, 2014). In the course of gathering data, I noted that one of the student participants, registered in the current adult literacy program, indicated that they were not sure if the adult literacy program was effective or not. This response was uncommon of any of the other student participant responses received and not consistent in the evaluation findings, yet did not impact the evaluation results.

Conclusion

The goal of this program evaluation was to assess whether the current curriculum was in line with the standards of the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010) through faculty and students' perceptions about the current program. Understanding the needs of underprepared first year traditional college students is essential to improve student performance and to promote academic achievement. Caffarella (2010) discussed the importance of teaching approaches, good management of the classroom, and strong leadership as conditions that impact the effectiveness of learning and student outcomes. Rogers (2013) argued that the purpose of the qualitative evaluation method is to understand the feelings and perceptions of individuals and concludes "program evaluation using a qualitative approach approaches are widely used in program evaluation. Program evaluations using a qualitative approach

also facilitate an understanding of the way in which context mediates the influence of program and project interventions” (p. 2). Lodico et al. (2010) argued that program evaluation using a qualitative approach research is a form of qualitative research that endeavors to a) discover meaning, b) investigate processes, and c) gain insight into an in-depth understanding of an individual, group, or situation (p. 269).

Focus group discussions, open ended questionnaires, and semistructured one-on-one interviews identified faculty, administrators, and students’ perceptions about the effectiveness of the current adult literacy program. The educational director believes that English courses along with the improved adult literacy program could be the gateway for first year traditional college students matriculating on time without the need for remedial courses. Results of the student and staff interviews indicated the program could be improved by integrating technology into the curriculum. Comments and evaluation scoring identified the desire to improve the adult literacy program based on the quality, evaluation, and instructional practices throughout the program. Recommendations for integrating a technology intervention in the adult literacy program are included in Section 3. The project developed is a stand-alone document that describes methods and lessons to help adult learners labeled as struggling to obtain the learning and workplace skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

As some researchers suggest, the lack of timely program evaluations in higher education institutions is contributing to issues of program accountability and preventing the education system from developing effective programs (DeAngelo, 2014; Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011). Recent demands have been placed on evaluating education programs in colleges and/or universities and verifying program impact in a timely manner. Section 3 provides an overview of the development and implementation of the adult literacy program evaluation and recommendation for an intervention. This section includes a program description, project goals, implementation plan, benchmarks, implications for change, and recommendations. A summative report has been integrated into the study outlining recommendations to improve the quality and effectiveness of the current program and suggesting that the program be adopted as the formal adult literacy program.

Program Description and Goals

The purpose of this project is to examine the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College and to assess whether the curriculum is in line with CHEA standards. In response to the educational director's concern of the program not being evaluated for more than 11 years, a report of the educational research findings was produced to inform college administrator leaders of the evaluation data. Included in the report is a recommendation to the decision makers to conduct an ongoing evaluation in an effort of assuring program quality. The problem was that the College had

been using a traditional teacher-led instruction, which appears to leave the first year traditional college students unfulfilled, leaving little room for development of language and technology skills. The qualitative data analysis was performed using the combined processes of focus group discussions, one-on-one interviews, and open-ended questionnaires. The themes that emerged from the data collection were: (1) reform of instructional program, (2) technology intervention, and (3) enhancing student learning through assessment. The triangulated data collected were measured against those themes resulting in answering the program evaluation questions developed. Educational technology is moving literacy instruction beyond its teacher-led, oral and print-based instruction to embrace online and electronic texts as well as multimedia (Amos, 2012). By changing the way that information is absorbed, processed, and used, a technology intervention is suggested as a possible solution based on the study findings in the executive summary. The technology intervention could influence how first year traditional college students read, write, listen, and communicate. Student and faculty interviews were conducted to gather additional information necessary to provide a deeper explanation for the success or failure of the program. By identifying student attitudes towards the current program, the study findings have strengthened the knowledge base on which decisions can be made to evaluate and to further improve the program. A more detailed discussion may be found in the Executive Summary (see Appendix A).

Goals of the Project

The overall goal of the project was to conduct a program evaluation. The findings of the research were used to develop the executive summary. In order to reach this goal, I

identified perceptions from students and faculty within the current adult literacy program and I provided insights into the phenomenon of a technology intervention. Prior to the recommendation of integrating a technology intervention in the adult literacy program, teachers used text-based instruction that did not benefit the students in meeting their academic needs (as reported by the focus group participants). Recommendations for the program may be located in the executive summary. Based on the recommendations the two main objectives of the technology suggested intervention were to use evaluations to improve the effectiveness of the program and its instructional practices of the current adult literacy program and to improve student achievement through the integration of technology.

Rationale

The rationale for choosing the project problem of the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College is that the educational director of this department stated that such an evaluation had not been conducted for more than 11 years and standards of the CHEA had never been met. The CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010) provided a model and guidelines towards common principals for evaluating higher education and programs and delivering 21 century quality assurance.

After interviewing the educational director, education dean, education coordinator, and faculty members of the adult literacy program of the college; visiting the office; coding responses from the traditional college students enrolled in the adult literacy program questionnaire; reviewing existing data and analyzing that data was completed.

The value of conducting an evaluation of the current adult literacy program component was supported in that it may serve to assess the adequacy of practice, identify needs, and to provide information to decision makers to help make decisions concerning modifying, improving, or continuing a program. The selection of the project genre, an evaluation, was supported by the following reasons. First, the curriculum component of the current adult literacy program had not been evaluated for more than 11 years and was not in alignment with CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010). Second, the department education director desired the evaluation of the curriculum component of the current adult literacy program. Finally, the evaluation helped to identify gaps in practices and measure the level of participant's satisfaction with the program.

How the Problem Is Addressed in the Evaluation

The adult literacy program component of the evaluation project addressed the problem that the College is using traditional teacher-led instruction, which does not appear to meet the needs of the first year traditional college students. The first way the evaluation addressed the problem was in the use of the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010) combined with the matrix to identify the type of data to be collected and evaluated. Since the standards are considered to embody best practices by colleges and universities, the principles and education standards were appropriate in the development of a conceptual framework to use for this evaluation. The matrix provided a systematic approach by organizing objectives to evaluate the effectiveness of the adult literacy program. Use of a summative evaluation of the adult

literacy program that uses the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010) to measure the external and internal accountability was the appropriate approach to take for this study. The conceptual framework for this study is Knowles's adult learning theory (1984).

The evaluation was also grounded in the Knowles adult learning theory that states adults are self-directed when it comes to their learning (Knowles, 1984). The Knowles adult learning theory is based on four factors, including transforming learning through activity (transformation through experience), the need for adults to be motivated to learn (e.g., being a first year traditional college student or transition student), the need to be active in the learning process (i.e., history of having positive or negative experiences in learning and environments or behaviors that influence actions) or take a task approach to skills (operationalizing or practicing learned skills and behaviors), and the need to have their past experiences regarded in the learning environment (Knowles, 1984; Taylor & Cranton, 2012).

Next, the evaluation addressed the problem of the College using traditional teacher-led instruction, which does not appear to meet the needs of the first year traditional college students, through the triangulated analysis of data. By carefully evaluating data from multiple resources, the coding and associating data with themes developed from relevant documents, focus group interviews, one-on-one interviews, responses from student and faculty participants were able to provide evidence and determine whether or not the current adult literacy program was in alignment with the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010). The

triangulation process allowed me to produce a report that is credible and provides validity.

Last, the evaluation project addressed the problem using the collection of data, the analysis of that data, and reports on the findings. This provided the educational director of the adult literacy department with empirical evidence for determining whether the adult literacy program was in compliance with the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010). Specific standards of CHEA effectively addressing the quality of the adult literacy program were also delivered. This evidence may be used to support or discontinue the program at the College; stage interventions; assess student achievement; and inform policy, funding, decision making, and evaluation.

Review of the Literature

Literature Related to the Genre and Search Terms

The literature review focused on the evaluation of the design and the content of the results. The literature review also provided evidence that supports explicit knowledge through focused activities. The project genre was a program evaluation using the qualitative approach to evaluate the adult literacy program being offered at the College for first year traditional college students. CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010) was used as the conceptual framework in place to evaluate the current first year program. The CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010) was also chosen because the adult literacy program education director identified the lack of empirical evidence associated with the program and its alignment with the standards. The findings revealed that the adult literacy program

and resources provided by current adult literacy program did not align with the CHEA professional standards. The following sources contributed to this literature review: American Evaluation Association (AEA), Google Scholar, various EBSCOHost databases, ERIC Sage publications, the U.S. Department of Education website, and Expanded Academic ASAP. The following terms in a variety of combinations and truncations were used to conduct the literature review: *accrediting organization policy and procedures, approaches to program evaluation, conducting and evaluating qualitative research, curriculum development, educational administration, educational evaluation, educational leadership, educational psychology, using technology to improve student literacy, and using technology to enhance literacy instruction*. The literature included in this review reflects the most appropriate content pertaining to the proposed professional development project.

Adult Education and Literacy: Closing the Gap

Attempting to close the gap between literacy and adult learning through this project, I wanted to show a different approach for an informed adult literacy program. Classical and modern theoretical studies have concentrated on attaining comprehensive explanations regarding the impact of technology on literacy acquisition (Hutchison & Reinking, 2011). A great deal of adult literacy programs during the 20th century were influenced by teacher-led, text-based instruction (Eldakak, 2012). According to Massengil (2010), when teaching low-literate adults integrating literacy instruction with technology into the curriculum almost always has a positive impact on student achievement. The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (2011) reported, as

technology advances and the American economy progressively learns as a result of experience, students need higher levels of literacy skills to comprehend composed writings, use information to solve problems, and write efficiently as a means to ensure the quality of postsecondary education and career readiness skills. Given the rapid speed of technology, a great deal of postsecondary students during the 21st century are influenced by the digital age and acquiring media and internet literacy to develop new knowledge and skills (Cooper, Robinson, Slansky, & Kiger, 2014). To improve access to learning, new information and communication technology are raising the bar across classrooms (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Accordingly, first year traditional college students need to be ready to thrive in today's digital age. This literature review provides insights for colleges to work towards modifying or creating a program that successfully implements technology to promote adult literacy proficiency. The next section will focus on integrating technology into the adult literacy curriculum and classroom.

Technology Intervention

Integrating technology into instruction could increase literacy skills for struggling low-literate adult learners (Taylor & Cranton, 2012). Lysenko and Abrami (2014) stated that using both tools (regular instruction and media instruction) adult students perform significantly better. According to Gee (2015), adult students struggling with literacy would benefit in an education program that integrates technology. Adding technology tools to adult literacy programs often create new platforms beyond the confines of traditional text-based instruction (Heafner, Groce, Bellows, Coffey & Bjerre, 2014). Moreover, school leaders who are responsible for curriculum programs and teachers who

facilitate learner motivation will need to take into account two things: First, the mindset of the classroom must change to promote student-centered learning. Second, adult learners and educators must enter into a collaboration or partnership with educational technology keeping in mind the end goal to create a community that sustains, encourages, and supports the learning process (Duffy & Jonassen, 2013). Meanwhile, teachers need content subject matter integrated with both pedagogical and technological expertise (Niess, 2015). In fact it is necessary to allow room for differentiated instruction such as digital literacy in adult literacy programs that responds to the needs of all learners (Dixon, Yssel, McConnell, & Hardin, 2014). Because adults possess a self-conscious awareness of why they are learning something, teachers need to facilitate a learning process that meets the learners' needs (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). On the other hand, the cognitive approach believed in the active involvement of the adult learner who appears to be in control of the learning experience is considered the key for literacy acquisition. Kolb (1984) discussed the experiential learning style theory of adult learners as a four stage learning cycle involving: (a) concrete experiences, (b) reflective observation, (c) abstract conceptualization, and (d) active experimentation (p. 4). Since the experimental learning ability seems to depend on the adult learners' experience, perceptions, cognitive and behavior, the integration of technology information-literacy components into the current adult literacy program would be a fairly common method for low-literate adult learners to implement social change into the 21st century.

The U.S. Department of Commerce (2012) indicated that more than half the people of the United States are online and 65% of U.S. children ages 2-17 are growing up

digital. Subsequently, integrating technology in the adult literacy curriculum is significant to ensure that all first year traditional college students at the College are offered the opportunities, the vision, and the encouragement, to develop the language skills they need to pursue life's goals, including personal achievement and participation as informed members of our society. The Internet is part of a sustained content-based pedagogy to develop first year traditional college students' literacy skills through a reformed literacy curriculum. Transforming the way the first year traditional college students learn is a conscious process where the textbook based literacy skills mediates and adapts to new digital and visual literacy skills with media technology (Tyner, 2014). On the contrary, adult learners who are not proficient in using technology to enhance learning and social communication skills could benefit from a literacy program that uses technology tools of the digital age. To promote independence and inspire motivation to adult learners who are not proficient in using technology, the curriculum will include assistive technologies. Examples of these technologies include: audio and visual aids, electronic dictionaries, software for voice recognition, co-writing, translation, and graphic organizing (Belzer & Pickard, 2015). Most importantly, these thoughtfully selected technology tools could help to build on strengths for adult learners who are not proficient and can also help to bridge the gap and accommodate the needs of all students.

Best Practices in Literacy Instruction

Conducting research on the importance of a program evaluation presented instructional strategies that could improve the adult literacy program, and increase student achievement. It is also important to note, program evaluations can reveal the

program's effect on participants, discover problems or needs early, ensure quality, and recommend improvements for the future. Integration of technology information literacy components into existing courses is genuinely a fairly common method of technological implementation. Hutchison and Colwell (2014) support and encourage technology integration into adult literacy instruction. According to Hutchison and Colwell, digital tools have the potential to transform instruction by promoting literacy skills needed to help students be sufficient enough to succeed in college. Rowan College has promoted a well-known integrated program, which has been present for a many years in which librarians and faculty members work together in curriculum and program development (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2012).

A longitudinal study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (2010) for postsecondary adult literacy programs, stated that equally through the use of technology integration there should be a positive correlation between participation in the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the college matriculation, and employment. The U.S. Department of Education completed a statistical comparison of adult students who participated in a postsecondary adult literacy program intervention using technology and of peers whom did not participate in a postsecondary adult literacy program intervention, using technology to determine the impact of the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the college that integrates technology. The U.S. Department of Education findings show that the adult student/s who participated in the adult literacy program intervention that included technology,

enhanced traditional literacy skills (reading, writing, critical thinking, communication, and information technology) needed for college readiness.

Despite the large number of articles and academic periodicals from different genres (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2012; Duffy & Jonassen, 2013; Hutchison & Colwell, 2014; Kolb, 1984; Tabor, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2010) attempting to clarify the concept of literacy learning; there is still a gap in the evaluation and best practices not being met in the adult literacy program. Using a summative evaluation of the adult literacy program that used the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010) administrators, faculty, and student attitudes were identified towards the effectiveness of the current program. The purpose and design of a summative evaluation are included in this subsection as an overview of Section 2, in order to strengthen or improve the current adult literacy program. Summative evaluation helped determine the overall effectiveness of the adult literacy program on instructional and learning objectives (Scriven, 2010). A structured conceptualization focus on the design of a prospective program was conducted by examining the program design, and the potential population the program served. As has been revealed through the faculty and student perceptions regarding the adult literacy program, the current program does not meet the current need, therefore, changes were considered. Thus, I chose to integrate technology into the current adult literacy program.

Implementation

Overview

The problem identified is that the current adult literacy program at the College has not been evaluated for more than 11 years to assess whether the curriculum is in line with the standards of the CHEA, the College's centralized recognition of accrediting organizations. This is a problem because the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College being evaluated for this study is a teacher-led, text-based instruction, which appears to leave the students unfulfilled. The educational director is interested in knowing if the current adult literacy program meets the CHEA standards for programs. This is a report of the evaluation of the adult literacy program component alignment with the CHEA standards. The CHEA Professional Standards for College and Universities are the standards that govern the College educational programs. Conducting an evaluation using the same standards that govern the college educational programs might also serve as a means to validate the effectiveness of services and programs, to identify gaps in practice, to provide recommendations for program improvement, and to influence allocation of resources. Therefore, a program evaluation and change of the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College was suggested. The program recommendation for change of the current adult literacy program involved a technology intervention.

Needed Resources and Existing Supports

This project entailed a program evaluation of the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College located in northeastern United States. The resources needed to implement the program evaluation included CHEA standards, study participants, the use of interviews, focus groups, questionnaires and other documents that

were relevant to the program evaluation. The technical resources required to conduct this evaluation included Internet access, computer, computer software, and e-mail access. The physical resources required to conduct this evaluation included the facilities used for the focus groups and one-one-one interviews of the adult literacy program component, the location of the participant interviews, the supplies and equipment used to document findings, and the space used for the review of documents.

Potential Barriers and Solutions

Potential barriers, such as uncooperative staff members, were not an issue, as the desire for the evaluation was clearly expressed by the education director and supported by the staff participants of the adult literacy program. Access to the physical facilities and resources proved not to be an issue because of the desire by the staff to have the evaluation performed and because I practiced open communication and flexibility in scheduling. The first year traditional college students who are enrolled in the current adult literacy program were welcoming and allowed for access to resources, which allowed me to review literature and materials without interrupting the daily flow of activities.

Implementation and Timetable

Because the evaluation identified which practices associated with program effectiveness, along with the implementation of a reformed project, the creation of a proposed timeline for implementing the project was applicable. Upon acceptance of the completed doctoral study, I will immediately inform the educational director at the College and offer to deliver the project. The offer will include an oral presentation and

the opportunity to answer questions. With the educational director's consent, I will extend an offer to present the project to the college education dean, education coordinator, and faculty members who represent the current adult literacy program.

Roles and Responsibilities

In a qualitative design using qualitative data, the evaluator must also be considered as one of the instruments used in the evaluation process (Glesne, 2011; Merriam, 2009). In the role of the evaluator, I served as the instrument for the gathering and the analysis of the data. My knowledge of the adult literacy program and CHEA standards were beneficial in the evaluation process.

The researcher. As the researcher, my role and responsibility was to conduct an evaluation of the adult literacy program with respect to whether or not it is aligned with the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities. In the role of the evaluator, I interviewed the education director, education dean, education coordinator, and faculty. I conducted the onsite visit to interview the participants, and to review resources, electronic and print documents relevant to the adult literacy program. I conducted an online questionnaire with the first year traditional students who are currently enrolled in the program. For general understanding I collected and analyzed the data from the one-on-one interviews, focus groups, documentation, and questionnaires.

Participants. The role and responsibilities of the adult literacy staff participants entailed a number of items. Staff personnel needed to agree to participate in the evaluation by signing the consent form. The education director needed to sign the letter of cooperation to participate in the interview, be aware of the purpose of the evaluation,

and cooperate with me by providing access to the evaluation site, relevant resources, and documentation.

Student participants. The role and responsibilities of the student participants were to be aware of the purpose of the evaluation, to be aware that by clicking on the link embedded in the e-mail request directing them to the questionnaire, they were giving an informed consent, and to participate and to respond to the online questionnaire. Together, the scholarly literature, data analysis, theories, and research including the findings addressed the content of the proposed project.

Important Data Points

Successfully implementing an adult literacy program requires analysis and thoughtful planning. The following list highlights why conducting a program evaluation is a valuable tool to educational leaders. Program evaluation helps:

- Determine whether program objectives and goals have been met and if participants are satisfied with the program.
- Identify a project's effectiveness or ineffectiveness after a specified length of time through faculty and student perceptions.
- Determine if faculty has the necessary skills, training, and resources to deliver services.
- Identify program strengths and weaknesses with the purpose of using the data to improve student achievement.
- Determine the college's budget, funding, and resources.

Conducting an evaluation either internally or with an outside evaluator will assemble an association's ability to conduct critical self-assessments. Most importantly, this will enhance program operations and, consequently, improve outcomes for those served. New programs integrating technology needed to be introduced, developed, and established to promote adult literacy instruction from continuing throughout formal schooling and into the workforce (Kamil, Mosenthal, Pearson, & Barr, 2014). This technology integration will require a change in the current adult literacy program at the College and into education as a whole. Similarly, the purpose of the evaluation was to educate the school leaders about the findings of the summative evaluation and to persuade them to pursue the recommendations.

Project Implications

Possible Social Change Implications

The focus of this evaluation served low-literate students who are eligible and enrolled in the current adult literacy program. These students have been identified by the U.S. Department of Education as needing a bridge from high school to college (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). The most important issue is that the current program does not appear to be in line with CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010). The current adult literacy program currently being offered at the College for first year traditional college students is not meeting the literacy needs of the students per the results revealed in the collected data from the staff and student participants of the current adult literacy program. Educational technology is pushing literacy instruction beyond its oral and print-based tradition and providing

students the ability to grasp online and electronic writings as well as multimedia resources and could be used to increase technology literacy practices (Wake & Whittingham, 2013). Therefore, such an evaluation might increase positive outcomes for students that use technology in literacy and provide a structure for the effectiveness of adult literacy programs. Through this validation, the faculty participants have elected to use the integration of technology in the program, as they have found the integration of technology feasible and accurate and believe in its effectiveness to change literacy and communication of adult students lacking literacy skills. The findings in this program evaluation may assist other broader educational settings in narrowing or filling the gap between what is currently being utilized and options for a new adult literacy program for low-literate struggling college students.

Additionally, the information presented in the evaluation report will assist other colleges and universities in reducing the learning curve of adult learners who lack basic literacy skills. Furthermore, integrating technology in an adult literacy curriculum will help prepare learners for success civic participation in a global environment. Finally, preparing low-literate learners to be globally competent, proficient in information technology, and adaptable to change in their community helps improve the quality, equity, and social justice in their communities as well as other environments.

The Importance of the Project to Local Stakeholders in a Larger Context

As we move forward to an age of technology in the 21st century, it is important to engage students in learning about technology and explain how it applies in their academic and professional life. Additionally, it is important for the College to provide opportunities

for student engagement at the college and community level. This program may serve as an example for other colleges, the potential for the development of emerging technologies in adult literacy programs increases. Preparing low-literate students to be globally competent, proficient in information technology, and adaptable to change in their community helps improve the quality, equity, and social justice in the communities they serve.

Summary

As mentioned earlier, Section 3 presented a description of the proposed project, explained the purpose of the evaluation, program description, barriers, the evaluation plan, and addressed project goals. Additionally, a review of literature has been provided summarizing an in-depth evaluation of previous research that contributed to this study. Furthermore, implications for social change and recommendations were discussed with the goal of improving the quality and effectiveness of the program.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

This section includes my reflections and conclusions based upon the program evaluation, as well as identifies the project strengths and limitations. Additionally, other subsections include recommendations of alternative approaches for addressing the problem, a discussion of scholarship, project development and evaluation, along with explorations of leadership and change. There are also subsections that include an analysis of my ability as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer. Finally, a reflection on the importance of work is discussed and a description of the potential impact the study could have on social change is explored. The implications, applications, and directions for future research conclude this section.

Project Strengths

This project of a program evaluation has several strengths. First, it examined and revealed the consistency of the students' and faculty perceptions as to the program's strengths and weaknesses. These student participants consisted of 23 males and 37 females ranging from ages 18–22. The faculty participant pool included: (a) the education program coordinator, b) two administrators, and c) two faculty members involved in the facilitation, implementation, quality, and evaluation of literacy learning and the current adult literacy program. The limited number of participants involved made it easier for me to learn about the program, while using descriptive data allowed me to understand student, faculty, and administrator experiences from which to draw conclusions on the evaluation of the project. The student and faculty participants received full disclosure and

were assigned pseudonyms in order to protect their identities. The protection of all participants' identities was important in order to collect accurate, open feedback on the questionnaires, in the one-on-one interviews, and during the focus groups. Obtaining full consent from the participants enabled me to follow-up with each participant in order to check for the accuracy of their responses. Secondly, participants were eager to share their thoughts and answered the questions to the best of their ability and knowledge (Creswell, 2009), which allowed the interviews to be completed in a timely manner. The students, faculty, and administrators' responses reflected how social change occurred through student involvement following the program. A thorough evaluation of the adult literacy program had not been completed in over 11 years, as indicated by the educational director, and the program was not in alignment with CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV (2010). This fact received much attention from the administration and faculty, along with students whose needs were not being met. Evaluating the effectiveness of the education project was critical to program accountability and for learning how to improve the services and or the quality of the program as supported under CHEA (2010), the NCAL (2008), and the NCLB (2001), specifically the integration of technology in educational programs. These services are designed to help low-literate college students to improve their literacy skills. With acknowledgement of the information age having a significant effect on our general surroundings, it is not unreasonable to assume that the information age should likewise influence the structure and function of adult literacy education (Parker et al., 2011). Finally, by focusing on the participants' answers, this study discerned that the goal of the

struggling college students was to become proficient with their literacy skills through real life, media-based communicative contexts. The purpose of implementing an adult literacy curriculum plan that integrates technology is to improve student achievement, and this can help to improve students' academic, life, and career skills through the use of media-based communicative contexts. Further, the students, faculty, and administrators' perceptions of the program strengths and weaknesses may be used by program officials to promote or improve the program. The findings may also help other colleges adopt a new program as a tool to remediate and apply interventions, specifically the technology intervention that is included in this evaluation of the adult literacy program.

Project Limitations

According to Lodico et al. (2010), in a qualitative study, the data collected from only a few students cannot be generalized to a larger population. However, the research can, and often does, contribute valuable knowledge to a broader community or population (Mertens, 2014). Equally important, was my intent to interview only students who were enrolled in the current adult literacy program. While 60 student participants was a large participation rate for the College, it is a considerably low number of participants for a researched-based program evaluation. There might have also been other students whom were not enrolled in the program, but who needed to acquire basic literacy skills. In addition to the student participants, there were only five staff participants who participated in one-on-one interviews. The limited number of the participants did not provide as rich of a discussion as could have been elicited.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Although the project study was successful in responding to the research questions, potential alternatives to the study would have been able to expand the participant pool with low-literate and struggling adult learners whom were enrolled in other education programs at the College. The findings could be generalized to colleges with similar programs and/or interests, and college leaders interested in developing or changing an adult literacy program would have access to data from the College. The interested colleges could then use the information collected to improve the program. As a matter of fact, program evaluation needs to be completed in a reasonable time to provide information on the program effectiveness or ineffectiveness as well as making sure that the program is in alignment with the college standards or policies.

Another consideration for an alternative approach to this project would be to implement a mixed methods program evaluation in an effort to determine the students and educators' beliefs and perceptions about the adult literacy program. Interviewing and surveying teachers and students using this method would reveal critical information regarding the adult literacy program, the implementation of the technology intervention, and the contributing factors associated with the successful implementation of the program as a whole. As more colleges implement technology into adult literacy programs, it could also be beneficial to collect additional data for further evaluation. The theoretical constructs, methodology, population, and outcomes of this study could become the basis of further studies and data could be easily collected through replication of this study.

Scholarship

This doctoral project study process inspired me to become independent in my scholarly endeavors. There were several challenges and difficulties that I faced over the course of this doctoral process to which I demonstrated great perseverance and required a leap of faith to complete my study. While developing this project, I learned the significance of conducting research, data collection, and data analysis, along with using and referencing credible sources, such as academic books, scholarly journals, and peer-reviewed articles.

As a scholar, I valued the knowledge of other scholar practitioners and earned a tremendous respect for their contributions to society. Moreover, I realize the importance of the process of conducting authentic research the need to critically analyze its validity, and of including the findings to guide my work. As I worked through my doctoral study, I faced numerous dissertation revisions and significant changes to the rubric which made my writing intensely difficult but simultaneously rewarding. In addition, accepting the recommendations of those charged with reviewing my work, I was inspired to value research and theory, dig deeper to perform a literature review, construct fieldwork, report research findings, and create a project based on my project outcomes.

Project Development and Evaluation

According to the adult literacy department education director, there has not been an evaluation of the adult literacy program administered in over 11 years at the College (D. T., personal communication, February 10, 2013). Because the College has a strong focus on adult literacy and raising student skill levels so that they become academically, socially, and economically endowed, it became apparent that a program evaluation for the

adult literacy curriculum was in order. I learned that the use of a conceptual framework was necessary to provide structure, a thorough analysis, and direction for program improvement. Choosing the most appropriate design for the project was necessary in order to have data that were representative of the problem being investigated. Also, I learned that using a preestablished instrument lends credibility to the evaluation and its end results. I recommended that ongoing evaluations of the adult literacy program involve all staff participants combined with the development of benchmarks for establishing expectations and goals for the adult literacy program. The recommendation could contribute to the quality and the worth of the continuance of the program.

Leadership and Change

Leadership is most effective when the entire organization is committed (Mihalache, Jansen, Van den Bosch, & Volberda, 2014). My doctoral journey has grounded me with the theory, practice, and skill development necessary to positively impact the current adult literacy program by evaluating the program alignment with national standards. Throughout this evaluation process, I have gained extensive knowledge of the role and maintenance of effective and ethical leadership. My leadership skills have evolved personally and professionally, and I have come to appreciate even more, leaders whom I have worked for over the years whom further improved their skills and lives and whom were committed to improving the skills and lives of others. This process was somewhat challenging but proved to be a rewarding exercise and experience.

This doctoral journey has helped me to embrace with even more vigor a quotation I extracted from Dr. Maureen Ellis (personal communication, 2015), my faculty and

dissertation committee chair from Walden University, “like a good marriage, a dissertation takes a strong commitment and dedication to make it through the good times and difficult times.” After evaluating the adult literacy program, I am a stronger advocate of the value and worth of educational programs, especially this one in its upholding of the College’s mission and objectives, its efforts to meet the needs of the students, and its efforts to demonstrate accountability to external stakeholders (community and industry partners). In addition, this process allowed me to be creative and select the most relevant information for stakeholders. As a leader, I am dedicated to creating and sustaining a positive culture and climate for the success of all. I also have a new awareness and feel responsible to promote social change.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

As a scholar, my research experience has greatly solidified my interest in pursuing a career in institutional research, in hopes of making a positive difference in the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities. While immersed in my research, I encountered and overcame several unique challenges. There were changes in committee members at a crucial juncture and changes to the rubric, along with numerous dissertation revisions. While adapting to these changes, I gained a newfound respect and admiration for the great minds of other scholars. Ultimately, throughout this scholarly journey I embraced the opportunity to expand my knowledge of theory and practice, learned new skills, and built on the strengths that I already possessed. Planning and conducting the research also helped me as a scholar to develop a clear sense of direction early on in the process. Likewise, soon into the process I realized the tremendous degree

of work and a number of attempts would be needed and that a great amount of perseverance would lead me to succeed in an environment of growth and excellence. Finally, my aspirations have been confirmed that enthusiasm, hard work, and devotion to learning are crucial to institutional success.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

As a practitioner, I remained on task and decided to complete the work regardless of the challenges that I encountered. As a practitioner and a leader, I needed to sustain the drive that was necessary to move my research further to garner change and influence policy for program evaluation in educational organizations. The integration of theory with practical experience through coursework along with valuable feedback from my committee members provided me with hands-on experience and contributed to my professional growth. Moreover, my doctoral journey has helped me to cite significant studies and implement them into a coherent plan that may be valued in educational processes. Additionally, my newly developed skills and knowledge will also be used in my role as a consultant to prepare assessment instruments, evaluations, and projects for institutions of higher education and organizations. I also hope to expand my work as a practitioner to help improve policy and decision-making through research and analysis.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

As a project developer, I came to know the importance of keeping an open mind, and being able to respond with positive willingness to make any changes required to move my research forward, starting from my study plan, and moving through its data collection, interpretation, and validation process. Following the steps outlined in the

rubric for program evaluation lead me towards collecting and organizing useful data. Similarly, my experience as a developer in this doctoral study has increased my knowledge of why needs assessment is so important to the project design and implementation. As a project developer, designing my own questionnaires, and conducting in-depth interviews allowed me to explore a more personal approach with each participant; this process also allowed me to see my strengths and weaknesses. In my career I've been involved in a number of program evaluations, and recommended new tools to improve academic achievement. Despite the number of programs that I have evaluated, or implemented as an instructional specialist and an educational consultant, I believe that this doctoral experience has provided me with advanced knowledge, skills, and a new attitude, necessary to examine and conduct other program evaluations as thoroughly as I did in this project.

Reflection on the Importance

Overall, the program evaluation was important because it provided evidence of the adult literacy program effectiveness or ineffectiveness and its alignment with the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and University. This program evaluation is particularly important to ensure that the program is meeting the needs of the students. The overall effect of this study could improve a program's functions and outcomes. The combined data from the focus groups, questionnaires, and one-on-one interviews, can inform program decisions at college and university levels. Internal and external stakeholders, administrators, and staff can use findings of this project to understand and improve practice. In the same fashion, students can use the project findings to gain new

knowledge and direction. As a scholar, practitioner, and project developer, I have gained new knowledge to create innovative strategies that can contribute to change and be used to improve practices. In like manner, I experienced change as I faced challenges that required patience and determination incomparable to my previous personal and professional life. The robust challenges placed in my path on multiple occasions, created a new conviction and passion for the project study. I subsequently became one by the quality of my study and the integrity of my intent. As a passionate life-long learner, I plan on continuing to research, learn, and grow.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

This program evaluation findings and current research conducted can be particularly valuable in managing, modifying, and improving the programs functional status at the College. Reviewing the evaluation research, administrators and staff will possess new knowledge regarding the programs significance and are able to use this knowledge as a prevention plan to promote positive changes. In addition, other colleges, educators, policy makers, and educational institutions may benefit from the project findings, helping them to make better decisions about funding and implementing programs to improve adult literacy learning outcomes. Finally, colleges across the nation could be positively affected as scholars and project developers review the findings of this project, using technology to enhance adult literacy education. Further it is sensible to believe that the ability to consolidate the educational opportunities that technology promises will help level the playing field among adult learners struggling with literacy. The results from this research will provide an intervention strategy and add much needed

information to fill gaps previously identified in this research base. For this purpose, the project results could help to enhance potential for future research and improve program evaluation practices.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This program evaluation has implications for providing the education dean with recommendations for future evaluations of the adult literacy program at the College. The implications included student and staff perceptions about the effectiveness of the current adult literacy program. In this doctoral study the completion of the evaluation is to ensure evidence-based practices. Simon (as cited in Driscoll, 2014) stated that, evaluation can help you measure the effect of past projects and support ideas for future initiatives. Stakeholders, administrators, and staff are able to use the strategies of this project to monitor and enhance the accuracy and consistency of an intercession to guarantee it is implemented as planned and that each component is conveyed in a practically identical way to all study participants over time. Improvement of the adult literacy program may help students to gain the skills necessary to improve their academia, personal, and work-life. The conceptual framework used to conduct this program evaluation may also be used to determine the adult literacy program effectiveness. This same framework can be applied to determine the alignment of its components with CHEA standards, which in turn can speak to the program's effectiveness. Continual evaluation of the adult literacy program and its alignment with CHEA standards will ensure that the adult literacy program is compliant with the College's mission and objectives. Further research is recommended to evaluate the program's goals and to ensure that the effectiveness of not

only this adult literacy program, but of all programs is maintained. This study looked at the use of teacher-led instruction primarily taught from textbooks. As a reinforcement method to best practices, there is also a need for ongoing research into how students perceive faculty fidelity in using the assessment and evaluation practices.

Conclusion

The project described in this project study entailed a program evaluation of the College's adult literacy program for low-literate skilled adults, and issues related to the gap of shifting from the paradigm of text and integrating technology into the adult literacy program. Additionally, Section 4 reflected the project's strengths, limitations, and research recommendations. Section 4 also presented a reflective analysis of what I learned about myself as a scholar, practitioner, and program evaluator, as well as the overall importance of the work. Finally, Section 4 included a reflection on the implications, applications, and directions for future research regarding the project. My journey through this doctoral process has been exciting and ignited my desire to pursue other opportunities in evaluation that can be applied to almost every aspect of education for the purpose of improvement.

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Appendix A: Executive Summary

Adult Literacy Program Evaluation
for First Year Traditional College Students

by

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January 2016

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Program Evaluation of an Adult Literacy Program
for First Year Traditional College Students

Overview

The final report of this program evaluation using a qualitative approach was an analysis of student interactions and perceptions of the adult literacy program. In a 14-day evaluation timeframe, this program evaluation using a qualitative approach was designed to assess program goals, objectives and outcomes. The evaluation incorporated collecting and analyzing research data from questionnaires, focus group discussions, and one-on-one interviews, to determine college students, faculty, and administration participant perceptions about the program. The evaluation also included the participants knowledge and understanding of the adult literacy program along with their perceptions of the text-based instruction, learning, and motivation. Three research questions related to student experiences, effectiveness of the program, interpretation of practices, and program impact on student learning, guided this study as follows:

RQ1: What are the faculty, education dean, and program education coordinator's perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College?

RQ2: What are first year traditional college students' perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College?

RQ3: Is the current curriculum in line with the standards of the CHEA?

These questions identified first year traditional college students' reactions regarding the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the current adult literacy program at the College.

Further discussions with the faculty and student participants included the need for integrating technology into literacy instruction and how technology influences language skills, transforms learning, and ultimately its effect of improving the current adult literacy program. Additionally, this evaluation proposes establishing protocol for the current adult literacy program delivery, evaluation, and future assessment using CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities C Section IV as the framework. The final analysis of the data is used to create a culture where outcomes assessment continually improves the quality of student engagement, learning, program, and institutional effectiveness. In addition, the data will be used to inform the Adult Literacy Department, administrators, stakeholder, and other colleges and or universities for future program improvement and practices. The adult literacy program evaluation, data collection, and analysis, was implemented in three phases:

Phase 1: Questionnaire responses were collected, analyzed, and arranged into theme categories in an attempt to learn more about the students' perceptions about the program from a broader prospective.

Phase 2: Focus groups interviews were conducted 1 hour a day for 14 days for a total of 14 hours, the first focus group session was held electronically utilizing Adobe Connect web conferencing software, which allowed the documenting of student interactions. The second and third sessions were conducted face-to-face (ftf) on the college premises. Subsequently, data were collected in an effort to analyze and understand how the adult literacy program impacted student experiences at the College.

Phase 3: During one-on-one interviews with the administrator and faculty participants, data pertaining to the quality of the program and its alignment with CHEA standards were gathered and analyzed to ensure best practices and meeting the needs of the students. An evaluation matrix comprised of program objectives and goals that inform decision making was completed prior to initiating qualitative data collection.

The summary report displayed student perceptions of their experiences in the adult literacy program and its impact on their learning. The expectation for the evaluation was to build credibility and validity to the study gained through transparency. The consistency from the conversion of multiple data sources was used to ensure credibility of the findings. All findings were validated by triangulating data from questionnaires, focus groups interviews, one-on-one interviews, archival records, and college documentation. Findings provide an understanding of how to use summative evaluation feedback to improve the effectiveness of the current adult literacy program as well as other adult learning programs. The development of the adult literacy curriculum plan that integrates technology aims to improve student achievement.

Summary of Findings

The data gathered from the focus group interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and one-on-one staff interviews, combined with the review of existing data, documents and coding of responses strongly support the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the adult literacy department's program and its alignment with the CHEA professional standards. The group's discussion was audio-recorded, and point-by-point notes were taken and interpreted for analysis purposes. Initially, to completely investigate and address each

research question, I designed written interview protocols. Additional data was collected to measure specific outcomes the adult literacy program is designed to achieve.

Field notes were taken and transcripts of the interviews were reviewed to identify common themes and patterns to answer my questions. Three key themes, reform of instructional program, technology intervention, and enhancing student learning through assessment, emerged from the coding process, and are relevant to the guiding research questions (see Table 1).

Table 1

Related Themes to Guiding Research Questions

Related Themes to Guiding	Research Questions
Research Questions	Related Themes
What are the faculty, education dean and program education coordinator's perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College?	Theme 1: Reform of instructional program Theme 3: Enhancing student learning through assessment
What are first year traditional college students' perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College?	Theme 2: Technology intervention Theme 3: Enhancing student learning through assessment
How is the current curriculum in line with the standards of the CHEA?	Theme 3: Enhancing student learning through assessment

RQ1: Faculty perceptions and Theme 1. Theme 1, reform of instructional program, was derived from the faculty responses to the first research question, What are the faculty, education dean, and program education coordinator's perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College? With reference to a previous statement, Administrator #1 expressed a vision for the role of technology in education to improve teaching and deepening student learning. "With appropriate changes programs can improve outcomes for all learners."

RQ2: Students' perceptions and Theme 2. Although the focus of research question 2 was, What are first year traditional college students' perceptions about the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College, the theme technology intervention emerged common across all student and staff participants data. Reflecting on a previous statement, Student #2, stated, "The use of multimedia technologies in instruction for adult literacy learners would be an effective approach in supporting reading and writing as opposed to textbook instruction." When asked for clarification, the same participant offered this response: "Integrating technology into the adult literacy instruction will allow the students to gain both literacy and computer skills, resulting in many cases increased career opportunities."

RQ3: Curriculum alignment and Theme 3. Theme 3, enhancing student learning through assessment, derived from the overall responses of faculty responses to the RQ3: How is the current curriculum in line with the standards of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation? Previously, Administrator #5 said, "Program assessment is consistently needed and accountability should be met to help benefit the

adult literacy program.” While Administrator #3 expressed an interest in media based curriculum in place of text-based, stating: “Integrating technology into our adult literacy program is incredibly valuable for the future. We suggest that our teachers get on the ground floor and take advantage of integrating technology effectively into the classroom”.

All student and staff questionnaire results pointed that it would be useful to implement technology into the adult literacy program. At the end of the research project the report was given to the participants to confirm the accuracy and completeness of the analyzed data. Comments were encouraged in an effort to probe the perceptions of the participants. Regarding curriculum alignment, participants were asked to respond to a rating scale of 1 to 3, with 1 being “not met” 2 “partially met”, and 3 “fully met” per each of the criteria within the 3 Dimensions for C Section IV of CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities (2010). These results indicate that all five staff members do not feel student achievement under the current adult literacy program meets C Section IV of CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities (2010).

This study has significant project implications related to the current adult literacy program and best practices associated to program effectiveness to stimulate social change. Technology integration initiatives discussed, have the potential to improve the quality and effectiveness of the program and promote social change. This study also informs staff members about ways to engage students in learning about technology and how it applies to a variety of academic, personal, and professional context. In addition, the information presented in the summary report will assist other leaders of higher

education in increasing the rate at which adult learners who lack basic literacy skills learn.

Purpose of the Program

The purpose of this qualitative program evaluation was to assess whether the current curriculum reflected the standards and goals of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and if the curriculum was effective on student performance. Specific protocol for evaluating the effectiveness of the adult literacy program was developed so the program procedures are in uniform across the curriculum. Research data from questionnaires, focus group discussions, and one-on-one interviews gave a great deal of insight into the perceptions of staff and students concerning the adult literacy intervention program. These data collected were taken to the educational dean prior at the completion of the research. As a new semester at the college was beginning, this data was able to give some suggestions for changing the traditional teaching methods in the adult literacy program at the College. Furthermore, the data will be useful in measuring the program's impact on student learning, outcomes, and evaluating the program's effectiveness.

Program Activities

By presenting the problem and possible solutions, the program evaluation report extends opportunities for dialog among school leaders and decision makers that could lead to an improved adult literacy program. The curriculum development process also should provide opportunities for reflection and revision so that the curriculum is updated and improved on a regular basis. Low-literate struggling adult learners' will be involved in interdisciplinary project based learning where technology is a central component of

instruction. These technology components will be delivered in an online setting, and the project-based portion of the project will be performed in a laboratory. In addition, proponents of technology integration may emphasize project-based-related practices (Craciun, & BunoIU, 2015) as a way to promote effective technology literacy learning. To meet the requirements of CHEA professional standards for colleges and universities, the College will employ best practices that ensure program effectiveness; promotion and maintenance of academic quality, and respect for institutional autonomy.

Purpose of the Evaluation

At the conclusion, the summative evaluation conducted includes triangulated data. Triangulated data collected was measured against student outcomes for academic performance. Themes resulting in answering the program evaluation questions developed and the adult literacy department focus group interviews, one-on-one interviews, responses from student participants, and faculty participants. Results of the staff and student participant interviews indicated the curriculum was not in alignment with CHEA standards.

Evaluation Barriers

Collaboration is the key to successful program evaluation. Involvement of student and staff participants is an integral part of the program evaluation. Staff and student participants were cooperative about participating in the evaluation, due to my informing them that the purpose of the evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of the adult literacy program and not their performance. However, if a change in the education director occurred during dissertation revisions, it could have caused frustration for the

staff and students, and or created a limited motivation for participation in the study.

Fortunately, the change did not produce a lack of vision for this program, as the newly appointed education director who closely worked with the former director of the program was already knowledgeable of what needed to change and why.

Evaluation Plan

The curriculum will be subject to ongoing evaluation and refinement in order to address the needs and interests of students that enroll at the school. All professional development will have specific stated outcomes to ensure program standards are met. Upon implementation, teachers will assess student knowledge/skills and make changes in classroom practice. For every professional development session, the assessment will be developed simultaneously. Precise implementations for recommendations follow.

Overview of Recommendations

The executive summary report most important objectives were to: determine the strengths and weakness of the current adult literacy program, measure if the program has positively impacted student achievement and to provide recommendations to school leaders to make future decision on improving the effectiveness of adult literacy programs. In order to ensure that the program is contributing to student achievement and improved learning outcomes, a program evaluation should be implemented on a continuous basis and throughout the duration of the program's existence. Moreover, school leaders and other colleges and universities can use the data, resources, and recommendations presented in this study to facilitate future evaluations.

Curriculum Plan

Program Intervention Purpose

Education has no higher purpose than preparing people to lead personally fulfilling and responsible lives. A technology intervention in the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College is recommended not only to enhance literacy skills of the eligible students enrolled in the program but to increase the effectiveness of the Adult Literacy Program. According to Butler, Leahy, Shiel, and Cosgrove (2013), technology education combined with literacy helps students develop the habits of mind they need to communicate effectively, investigate, access, and use information. Technological literacy in the present day world means the capacity to utilize, oversee, understand, and assess technology. Students should know how to use new technologies and understand how new technologies affect us socially. Technology is the innovation, change of learning to satisfy perceived human needs and wants. An example of a lesson plan integrating technology in the literacy program and activities is provided, including a sequence of activities and evaluations to provide a systematic idea on how to engage literacy students and enliven your lessons (see Appendix A1: Lesson Plan).

Benchmarks suggest reasonable recommendations towards progress of the adult literacy program (see Appendix A2: The Benchmarks). *Benchmarks were suggested to* help educators decide what to include as (or exclude from) specific learning goals in a core curriculum.

Professional Development Training Curriculum & Materials

A professional development seminar is recommended to take place prior to the start of the Adult Literacy program so faculty are immersed in the mission, philosophy, vision, values, and key aspects of the college culture before they enter the classroom. The professional development seminar will be divided into three sections, consisting of technology interventions, team building and curriculum development. During the first module of the seminar, faculty will learn about the technology intervention model. Teachers will deepen their understanding of the culture. Team building activities will promote trust and a collegial atmosphere. Faculty should participate in activities to enhance their ability to differentiate the curriculum. During the second module, the focus will be on technology. The technology coach and other experts in the integration of technology will train the adult literacy department staff. During the third module, teachers will work together on lesson plans and annual plans.

Three full days should be designated as professional development days and spread throughout the year. On those days, the adult literacy department will either have experts come to the college and work with faculty, or faculty members will work in teams on areas of improvement. Professional development also will take place as a part of the team structure that will be fundamental at the College. Key to effective professional development is setting up a school society where learning is esteemed among all individuals from the school.

Summary

The executive summary of this study provides an overview of the purpose of the program, program activities, and purpose of the evaluation. In addition, an overview of findings or outcomes and recommendations from the evaluation are presented, giving the reader and or stakeholder's a brief but inclusive synopsis of the report's content without having to read the entire document. A successful intervention, specifically technology, may help other colleges and universities adopt new programs to increase student achievement, while preparing them for the workforce


References

- Butler, D., Leahy, M., Shiel, G., & Cosgrove, J. (2013). *Building towards a learning society: A national digital strategy for schools*. Retrieved from <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Information-Communications-Technology-ICT-in-Schools/Digital-Strategy-for-Schools/Building-Towards-a-Learning-Society-A-National-Digital-Strategy-for-Schools-Consultative-Paper.pdf>
- Craciun, D., & BunoIU, M. (2015). Why blended learning models in Romanian science education? In I. Roceanu (Ed.), *The 11th International Conference eLearning & Software for Education* (vol 3, pp. 460-468). Bucharest, Romania: Carol I NDU Publishing House. Retrieved from <http://proceedings.elseconference.eu/index.php?r=site/index&year=2015&index=papers&vol=20>

Appendix A1: Lesson Plan Template

Faculty: A, B, C, D, and E	Date: March 8-May 5, 2015
Subject: Adult Literacy Program integrating technology	Bell (s): Various Bells
Lesson Topic: Unit 1-9: Achieving Literacy Words in Context, Recalling Information, Graphic Information, Constructing Meaning, Extending Meaning	Essential Question(s): Describe how technology effects the learning process.
<p>TABE Tested Level: Low-literate First year traditional college students</p> <p>Reading – The student will read a variety of print material to improve vocabulary, recall information, understand graphic information, construct meaning, and extend meaning.</p> <p>Writing -The student will use writing to interpret, analyze, and evaluate ideas.</p> <p>Speaking – The student will use media resources to integrate critical speaking skills, such as phone competency, expression of opinions and abilities, negotiating, and providing descriptions and instruction.</p> <p>Technology - The student will utilize online resources to collect, evaluate, and organize information that enhances his/her literacy skills.</p>	
<p>Objective(s) (Setting a Purpose): The Learner will...</p> <p>Identify and use language skills to make connections in their core subjects. education and training affect career advancement.</p> <p>Discuss the factors that influence integrating technology into literacy instruction.</p>	
<p>Materials:</p> <p>Computer Station; Smart Board; Flash drive; Achieving TABE Textbook in Reading, Writing. Listening, and Speaking skills of adult literacy learners; Tech Resources: Best practices for teaching and student learning resources; Learning technology apps with animation and interactivities. Digital and interactive paper.</p>	<p>Vocabulary:</p> <p>Reading, Writing, Speaking, Technology</p>
<p>Anticipatory Set (Hook) (15 min.): Relevancy:</p> <p>Imagine the job or career you would like to have 15 years from now. How will the development of literacy skills improve your employment situation?</p> <p>Modalities: (<i>Audio, Visual, Kinesthetic</i>)</p>	
<p>Week 1 Unit 1</p> <p>3/8</p>	<p>Procedures: Output <u><i>Student Activities</i></u></p> <p>Introduction/ English Language Proficiency: Reading, Listening, Writing, Speaking/Getting Started</p>

Week 2 Unit 2 3/15	Achieving TABE Success integrating technology 1- Assisted reading, repeated reading, recognizing synonyms, using synonyms, recognizing antonyms, using antonyms, using context clues, spelling words. Using computer software and resources for individual and group projects. Using computer software and resources for individual and group projects. Review and Assessment.
Week 3 Unit 3 3/22	
Week 4 Unit 4 3/29	Achieving TABE Success integrating technology 2 – Recalling information, Idioms, Acronyms, identifying details, recognizing details, identifying sequence, recognizing sequence, identifying stated concepts, understanding stated concepts. Using computer software and resources for individual and group projects. Review and Assessment.
Week 5 Unit 5 4/5	
Week 6 Unit 6 4/12	Achieving TABE Success integrating technology 3- Graphic information, Borrowed words, Thesaurus, using graphs, reading maps, using the Dictionary, using indexes, using reference sources, using forms, consumer materials. Using computer software and resources for individual and group projects. Review and Assessment.
Week 7 Unit 7 4/19	
Week 8 Unit 8 4/26	Achieving TABE Success integrating technology 4 – Constructing meaning, similes, analogies, identifying character traits, recognizing character traits, identifying main idea, comparing and contrasting, drawing conclusions, recognizing and using cause and effect, summarizing and paraphrasing, using supporting evidence, mastering parts of speech. Using computer software and resources for individual and group projects. Review and Assessment
Week 8 Unit 9 5/5	
<i>Note: In accordance with the daily lessons plan and on an as needed basis, some student will be further ahead than others and working on other class projects.</i>	
	Achieving TABE Success integrating

	technology 5 – Extending meaning, sensory language, connotations, predicting outcomes, recognizing fact and opinion, identifying and recognizing author's purpose, effect and intention, point of view, making generalizations, identifying style, genre techniques, applying passage elements. Using computer software and resources for individual and group projects. Review and Assessment.
	Achieving TABE Success integrating technology 6-Foundation writing, language arts, writing, capitalization, punctuation and writing, writing skills online activities, sentences and paragraphs. Review and Assessment.
	Unit 7: Review activities 1-6. Workshop Reading and Writing Skills, Reinforcement utilizing technology 1-7.
	Unit 8: Reading, Writing, Speaking, Technology integration Reinforcement. Workshop staying connected with each other.
	Unit 9: Review activities.
	 Review Notes, calculations, and charts to prepare for the English Language Proficiency Test Units 1-9
	<u>Independent Practice:</u> Student Activities: Use data-analysis tools to accelerate learning processes enabled by technology.
<p>Homework: Complete the Language Proficiency Skill building drills. Search a local newspaper and the Internet to find two jobs for which you would qualify.</p> <p>Reading/Writing Across The Curriculum: <i>Read from Smart board and all text and print material. Completion of the anticipatory set and Essential Question.</i></p> <p>Integration of Technology: <i>Smart board, Individual Computer Stations, Flash drives and Internet usage.</i></p> <p>Integration of Kinesthetic (Movement) and/or Manipulative (Hands-on):</p> <p>Modalities: <i>(Audio, Visual, Kinesthetic)</i></p>	
<p>Closure: (5 minutes)</p> <p>Save & close programs, Save all work, log-off of CPU, return textbooks, remove flash drives.</p>	

Modalities: (<i>Audio, Visual, Kinesthetic</i>)	
Extended Learning Opportunities: Teacher student assistance during class and after school: Peer tutoring, group work.	Evaluation/Assessment: Formal on-line Assessment of student attainment of unit concept and/or English language proficiency exam. Informal review of student attainment of class lesson/assignment/ assessments/tests. e.g.: multiple choices, completion matching and/or short answers.
<p>Suggestions for Differentiation: The strategies used will depend on the assignment the students are currently working on. (Students may be actively working on different tasks simultaneously.) Reading aloud from the text & smart-board. Working in groups to complete assignments, student preferred seating; clarification of directions for students with accommodations, provide precise guidelines for working in groups, mediate conflict within groups, prompt high level thinking, encourage multiple responses for questions.</p> <p>Channeling chapter overview and initiate with engaging students in interactive peer groups of two in successful lesson comprehension and completion. Student's research and move through a comprehensive study of significant, contextualized, real world office situations/simulations individually or with a learning partner comprised of students working on the same level of an assigned task/project with readiness levels and/or mixed ability levels. This process would be modified accordingly as needed.</p> <p>Compacting (Allow accelerated students to move ahead a complete future assignments while other students are teacher/peer tutored with daily assignments)</p> <p>Independent study (Each students may be actively working on a different task than other students.)</p> <p>Flexible grouping (Excelling students may be grouped with students that require extra help.)</p> <p>Learning Contracts (Students that are not excelling after the first progress report, will be placed on learning contracts and will complete assignments as outlined in his/her individual contract.)</p>	

Appendix A2: Project Benchmarks

Benchmarks. The School will adopt the technology intervention for the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the College.

Benchmarks were set by the Campus President, the Education Director, and the Education Dean of the adult literacy department at the College.

Benchmarks 1 and 2: Curriculum and Instruction

The Adult Literacy department will incorporate technology in every class. The College will follow all applicable Council for Higher Education Accreditation standards to ensure a meaningful education in an inclusive environment. The low-literate first year traditional college students at the College will receive 90 minutes of literacy curriculum to build the necessary foundation for success in a college. The curriculum will utilize a theme-based structure including traditional literature and grammar combined with technology as well as addressing 21st century literacies.

Benchmark 3: Standards

Program Requirement 3.1: Rigor

- a. Curriculum, instruction and assessment are aligned.
- b. The technology intervention for the adult literacy program develops a detailed curriculum scope and sequence for the core disciplines.
- c. The scope and sequence demonstrates vertical alignment of content areas to the standards of CHEA.

- d. Assessment, aligned to the CHEA standards along with the curriculum, provides timely feedback on gaps in student comprehension.
- e. The technology intervention supports the success of all students to take and reach college readiness skills

Program Requirement 3.2: Literacy curriculum

- a. The delivery of innovative curricular programs related to reading, writing, listening, speaking, and information technology are well defined and aligned to CHEA for colleges and universities standards.
- b. Performance assessments are aligned to CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities.
- c. The researcher develops a plan for accelerating student achievement, particularly for low-literate learners and underserved students who have been underserved by the use of conventional teaching methods in the adult literacy program at the College.
- d. The researcher developed a plan for bringing together the administrator and adult literacy faculty, together for continued discussion on improving the adult literacy program.
- e. The researcher incorporates work-based, contextual learning with a global perspective into the curriculum.
- f. The researcher proposes that the traditional students who are registered and enrolled in the adult literacy program participate in extra-curricular academic

activities centered on reading, writing, and information technology, such as and reading competitions or literacy fairs.

Benchmark 4: Instruction**Program Requirement 4.1: Best practices**

- a. Instruction is data driven.
- b. Faculty understands and effectively utilizes multiple strategies to examine assessment results and refine instruction.
- c. The Academy has a structure for best practices, responsibility, and accountability, for student learning in the adult literacy program.
- d. Instruction is organized around clear expectations and CHEA professional standards students and faculty know what is expected of them.
- e. Faculty uses an aligned scope and sequence that coordinates the integration of technology and literacy resources.
- f. Faculty use high quality curricula tools and materials that are aligned with CHEA professional standards.
- g. Faculty uses standards-driven assessment to drive instruction. Progress towards standards is tracked on a daily basis, and teachers use assessment data to guide every instructional decision.

Program Requirement 4.2: Literacy plan

- a. The College staff is committed to the belief that all students enrolled in the adult literacy program must become competent readers, writers, critical thinkers, and communicators.

- b. Faculty connect content material to student's work or lives and students share these connections through written, spoken communication, and use information through a technology intervention.
- c. The College explicitly uses literacy strategies to improve the adult literacy program.
- d. The education dean and faculty of the adult literacy department work with the researcher, consultants, and literacy experts to select appropriate curriculum and instructional materials for the adult literacy program learning to meet the literacy needs of the students.

Program Requirement 4.3: Technology integration

- a. Technology is integrated into the adult literacy program, curriculum, teaching strategies and daily operations for low-literate first year traditional college students at the College students and staff.
- b. All first year traditional college students at the College have access to technology and media resources that support and enhance learning.

Program Requirement 4.4: Transformational use of technology -

- a. An essential pedagogical tool, integrated intentionally into curriculum and instruction not merely to enhance, but to transform, learning.
- b. Teaching staff will spend a significant portion of time during professional development working on the use of technology in the classroom and ways to integrate it throughout the curriculum to assist in teaching and learning.

The literacy plan combined with the technology intervention is to provide technology in the adult literacy program to solve problems while gaining skills in communication, collaboration, critical-thinking, and creativity. The lessons are divided into independent, nine-week units, assuming a 45-minute class period. The technology intervention component is designed to be taught in conjunction with a rigorous academic curriculum. Using the same advanced software and tools as those used by the world's leading companies, the first year traditional college students at the College, learn how to apply reading, writing, technology, and critical thinking to their everyday lives.

Units

Units are shown in Appendix A: The Project. Described in the units are methods and lessons to help eligible college students who are enrolled in the adult literacy program become more fluent in literacy.

Objectives

- a. Low-literate students participating in the reformed adult literacy program will obtain the language and learning skills necessary to make connections in their core subjects.
- b. Technology will to help achieve educational goals. Such goals could include increased student achievement (i.e., improved reading and writing, greater employability, increased self-confidence, and empowerment).
- c. 100% of students in the adult literacy program will reach mastery on 85% of the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) in every curricular unit before continuing to the next unit.

- d. Technology will effectively enhance teaching and the effectiveness of the current adult literacy program at the College.

Program Requirement: Assessment

- a. Diagnostic, ongoing and end of semester assessments (10 weeks) for all students drive instructional decisions.
- b. CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities are used to develop common benchmark assessments.

In order to implement this blueprint, the school will utilize several assessment tools. As part of the technology intervention each student will take a pre-assessment associated with each content unit (reading, writing, comprehension, and communication). This assessment will determine the placement and appropriate content that the student needs to encounter in each unit. The system will then administer a post-assessment to ensure that the student is able to master all elements in the unit, including those that the student "placed" out of. In addition, each student will regularly encounter curriculum assessments in the same format and at the same level of rigor as the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) to determine the student skill levels and aptitudes. Finally, each student will be assessed as part of the project-based learning units using performance rubrics and portfolios. These tools will capture the long-term growth of the student in areas not usually tested using TABE tests. These include communication, collaboration, and the use of technology, just to name a few.

Appendix B: 2010 CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities, Section

C, IV

Introduction:

Institutional Eligibility and Recognition Policy

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation will serve students and their families, colleges and universities, sponsoring bodies, governments, and employers by promoting academic quality through formal recognition of higher education accrediting bodies and will coordinate and work to advance self-regulation through accreditation. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) Professional Standards for Colleges and Universities invites participation by degree-granting institutions of higher education that are accredited by a CHEA recognized accreditation organization. The goals of CHEA recognition are to advance quality assurance through accreditation to serve students and their families, colleges and universities, sponsoring bodies, governments, and employers. All eligible organizations must meet the general standards enunciated in this recognition process.

The recognition process will place increasing emphasis on the effectiveness of accreditation organizations in assuring the academic quality of institutions and programs through standards, policies, and procedures that address appropriate rigor, degree nomenclature, and at the undergraduate level, a general education program designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and at all levels, advanced intellectual inquiry. Recognition will be determined in accordance with established standards and rules of good practice that ensure fair treatment, promotion and maintenance of academic quality, and respect for institutional autonomy. Organizations that accredit institutions will be eligible to apply for recognition by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation if the majority of their accredited institutions are degree-granting. Organizations that accredit programs will be eligible to apply for recognition by CHEA if the majority of the accredited programs are degree granting.

An accreditation organization is responsible for providing assurance of the percentage of degree-granting units within its constituency and demonstrating its general support with the goals of CHEA recognition. In pursuit of its mission to advance higher education, and in light of knowledge and experience, CHEA reserves the right to amend the foregoing and/or grant recognition to such accrediting entities that in CHEA's judgment warrant such recognition.

Scoring

Rate the dimensions of the current adult literacy program effectiveness using this 3 point ranking scale for each evaluation criterion.

CHEA Professional Standards Addressed in Section I, 602.16 and 602.17

Section I of C Section IV Criteria 1: 602.16 Standards (i through x)
1. The agency's accreditation standards effectively address the quality of the institution or program with respect to student achievement.
Section II of C Section IV Criteria 2: 602.16 Standards (a through f)
2. The agency's accreditation standards effectively address the quality and evaluation of institutional programs.
Section III of C Section IV Criteria 3: 602.17 Standards (a through g)
3. The agency's accreditation standards effectively address the institution ability demonstrates its compliance with the agency's standards.

1 = Standard is not met at all or in any appreciable manner. Program is deficient and requires extensive improvements.

2 = Partially meets standard. Program performance could be improved.

3 = Fully meets standard.

NA = Not applicable. Standard does not apply to this institution and/or career services office. In addition, to achieve maximum benefit from this workbook, indicate if you have made any comments. If you have, list your comments in a numbered list that corresponds to the standard. Use comments to clarify and justify your rating of any given standard.

At the end of each section or subsection is an area for entering your composite and mean scores. To determine your composite score, simply add the total number of points in that section/subsection derived from the rated evaluation criteria, which are applicable to your institution. To determine your mean score, divide your total number of points by the total number of evaluation criteria in that section/subsection which are applicable to your program.

CHEA Recognition Policy/Adopted 9/28/98/Revisions Adopted 1/23/06/Revisions

REQUIRED STANDARDS AND THEIR APPLICATION

Section I: 602.16 Accreditation and preaccreditation standards.

(a) The agency must demonstrate that it has standards for accreditation, and pre-accreditation, if offered, that are sufficiently rigorous to ensure that the agency is a reliable authority regarding the quality of the education or training provided by the institutions or programs it accredits. The agency meets this requirement if-

(1) The agency's accreditation standards effectively address the quality of the institution or program in the following areas:

(i) Success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution's mission, which may include different standards for different institutions or programs, as established by the institution, including, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, State licensing examination, and job placement rates.

(ii) Curricula.

(iii) Faculty.

(iv) Facilities, equipment, and supplies.

(v) Fiscal and administrative capacity as appropriate to the specified scale of operations.

(vi) Student support services.

(vii) Recruiting and admissions practices, academic calendars, catalogs, publications, grading, and advertising.

(viii) Measures of program length and the objectives of the degrees or credentials offered.

(ix) Record of student complaints received by, or available to, the agency.

(x) Record of compliance with the institution's program responsibilities under Title IV of the Act, based on the most recent student loan default rate data provided by the Secretary, the results of financial or compliance audits, program reviews, and any other information that the Secretary may provide to the agency; and

Section II: 602.16 Accreditation and preaccreditation standards.

(2) (a) The agency's preaccreditation standards, if offered, are appropriately related to the agency's accreditation standards and do not permit the institution or program to hold preaccreditation status for more than five years.

(b) If the agency only accredits programs and does not serve as an institutional accrediting agency for any of those programs, its accreditation standards must address the areas in paragraph (a)(1) of this section in terms of the type and level of the program rather than in terms of the institution.

(c) If the agency has or seeks to include within its scope of recognition the evaluation of the quality of institutions or programs offering distance education or correspondence education, the agency's standards must effectively address the quality of an institution's distance education or correspondence education in the areas identified in paragraph (a)(1) of this section. The agency is not required to have separate standards, procedures, or policies for the evaluation of distance education or correspondence education;

(d) If none of the institutions an agency accredits participates in any Title IV, HEA program, or if the agency only accredits programs within institutions that are accredited by a nationally recognized institutional accrediting agency, the agency is not required to have the accreditation standards described in paragraphs (a)(1)(viii) and (a)(1)(x) of this section.

(e) An agency that has established and applies the standards in paragraph (a) of this section may establish any additional accreditation standards it deems appropriate.

(f) Nothing in paragraph (a) of this section restricts--

(1) An accrediting agency from setting, with the involvement of its members, and applying accreditation standards for or to institutions or programs that seek review by the agency; or

(2) An institution from developing and using institutional standards to show its success with respect to student achievement, which achievement may be considered as part of any accreditation review.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1845-0003)

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1099b)

Section III: 602.17 Application of standards in reaching an accrediting decision.

The agency must have effective mechanisms for evaluating an institution's or program's compliance with the agency's standards before reaching a decision to accredit or preaccredit the institution or program. The agency meets this requirement if the agency demonstrates that it--

(a) Evaluates whether an institution or program--

(1) Maintains clearly specified educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate in light of the degrees or certificates awarded;

(2) Is successful in achieving its stated objectives; and

(3) Maintains degree and certificate requirements that at least conform to commonly accepted standards;

(b) Requires the institution or program to prepare, following guidance provided by the agency, an in-depth self-study that includes the assessment of educational quality and the institution's or program's continuing efforts to improve educational quality;

(c) Conducts at least one on-site review of the institution or program during which it obtains sufficient information to determine if the institution or program complies with the agency's standards;

(d) Allows the institution or program the opportunity to respond in writing to the report of the on-site review;

(e) Conducts its own analysis of the self-study and supporting documentation furnished by the institution or program, the report of the on-site review, the institution's or program's response to the report, and any other appropriate information from other sources to determine whether the institution or program complies with the agency's standards;

(f) Provides the institution or program with a detailed written report that assesses--

(1) The institution's or program's compliance with the agency's standards, including areas needing improvement; and

(2) The institution's or program's performance with respect to student achievement; and

(g) Requires institutions that offer distance education or correspondence education to have processes in place through which the institution establishes that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education course or program is the

same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. The agency meets this requirement if it--

(1) Requires institutions to verify the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the option of the institution, methods such as--

(i) A secure login and pass code;

(ii) Proctored examinations; and.

(iii) New or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identity; and

(2) Makes clear in writing that institutions must use processes that protect student privacy and notify students of any projected additional student charges associated with the verification of student identity at the time of registration or enrollment.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1099b)

Appendix C: Letter of Introduction: Invitation to Participate

You are invited to take part in a research study of an evaluation of the adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the college. This study is being conducted by Yvette Folden McCauley, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know the researcher as a former faculty member in admissions. The purpose of this study is to ascertain how the current adult literacy program for first year traditional college students at the college affects academic performance for language proficiency and literacy skills of the first year traditional college students at the college. Knowledge gained through this work will encourage positive social changes that will embrace diversity within the college, and help newcomers establish themselves as they adapt to the local community and American educational systems.

This study is voluntary, and your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study will be respected. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during or after the study. If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to answer questions, in depth and honestly, in a one-hour one-on-one audio recorded interview during the Spring 2014 semester. To review the data for accuracy, you will be asked to arrange for a second meeting within two weeks of the initial interview.

If you wish to accept this invitation, you may contact Yvette Folden McCauley by cell phone or Walden University

Sincerely,

Yvette Folden McCauley

Appendix D: Letter of Cooperation from the Adult Literacy Department: Community
Research Partner

CJ Goldsmith
Educational Director, Adult Literacy Program

Date: February 23, 2015

Dear Yvette Folden McCauley,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Program Evaluation of the current adult literacy program at the College. As part of this study, I authorize you to review and gather data from the college's educational reports and proposals, first year traditional college student statistics, student evaluations, assessment data, onsite evaluation of tangible and human resources, and brochures. In addition, I authorize the use of focus group discussions with first year traditional college students currently enrolled in the adult literacy course and one-on-one interviews with instructors teaching the adult literacy course. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: Allowing access to the main office within college's business hours and providing materials identified above for data collection. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Authorization Official

Contact Information

Walden University policy on electronic signatures: An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Electronic signatures are only valid when the signer is either (a) the sender of the email, or (b) copied on

the email containing the signed document. Legally an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. Walden University faculty verify any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an email address officially on file with Walden).

Appendix E: Letters of Informed Consent

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study of an evaluation. You were chosen for the interview because you are a student or an employee of a private school. Please read this form and ask any questions you have before agreeing to be part of the interview.

This interview is being conducted by a researcher named Yvette Folden McCauley, who is a doctoral student at Walden College. Yvette Folden McCauley formerly held a position of Admissions Advisor for your school.

Background Information:

The purpose of this interview is to practice interviewing skills and to learn about the participant's experiences with an adult literacy program intervention and its relationship to learning outcomes.

Procedures:

If you agree, you will be asked to participate in an audio-recorded interview, lasting 45-60 minutes.

Voluntary Nature of the Interview:

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. This means that everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you want to be in the interview. No one at the College will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the interview. If you decide to join the interview now, you can still change your mind later. If you feel stressed during the interview, you may stop at any time. You may skip any questions that you feel are too personal.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Interview:

There is the minimal risk of psychological stress during this interview. If you feel stressed during the interview, you may stop at any time. There are no benefits to you from participating in this interview. The interviewer will benefit by practicing interviewing skills.

Compensation:

There is no compensation for participating in this interview.

Confidentiality:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this interview project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the interview.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher's name is Yvette Folden McCauley. The researcher's doctoral chair is Dr. Maureen Ellis. You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via (708)257-6420 and yvette.mccauley@waldenu.edu or the instructor at maureen.ellis@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Director of the Research Center at Walden College. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **02-16-15-0175990** and it expires on **February 15, 2016**. Please print or save this consent form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By clicking the link below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

[Http://ibix.asp/adult_literacy/program](http://ibix.asp/adult_literacy/program)

FACULTY CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study of an evaluation at the college. The researcher is inviting you, as a faculty member of the adult literacy program at the College, because you are involved in facilitating effective implementation of the program which is offered through the adult literacy department. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Yvette Folden McCauley, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. Yvette Folden McCauley formerly held a position of Admissions Advisor for your school.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the current adult literacy program at the College.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in a face-to-face group interview with the other faculty members of the adult literacy program. This interview should take no more than 60 minutes. During the interview you will be asked to comment your thoughts and opinions on the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and University C Section IV (2010).

Here is a sample question:

Please share your opinion on how the adult literacy program supports the mission, academic programs, experiential programs, and advancement of the institution to promote student learning and student development.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at the college will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

There are no known risks to participating in this study. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

The associated benefits to you participating in this study are the enhancement of the amount and quality of services provided.

Payment:

There is no payment associated with completing this survey.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept anonymous. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via telephone at 708-257-6420 or e-mail yvette.mccauley@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 02-16-15-0175990 and it expires on February 15, 2016.

Please save this consent form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. My signature below indicates that I understand and that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Signature _____ Date _____

ADMINISTRATOR CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study of an evaluation at the college. The researcher is inviting you, as an administrator of the adult literacy program at the College, because you are involved in facilitating effective implementation of the program, which is offered through the adult literacy department. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Yvette Folden McCauley, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. Yvette Folden McCauley formerly held a position of Admissions Advisor for your school.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the current adult literacy program at the College.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in one-on-one interviews. This interview should take no more than 60 minutes. During the interview you will be asked to comment your thoughts and opinions on the CHEA Professional Standards for Colleges and University C Section IV (2010).

Here is a sample question:

Please share your opinion on how the adult literacy program supports the mission, academic programs, experiential programs, and advancement of the institution to promote student learning and student development.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at the college will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

There are no known risks to participating in this study. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

The associated benefits to you participating in this study are the enhancement of the amount and quality of services provided.

Payment:

There is no payment associated with completing this survey.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept anonymous. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via telephone at 708-257-6420 or email yvette.mccauley@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is IRB will enter approval number here and it expires on IRB will enter expiration date.

Please save this consent form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. My signature below indicates that I understand and that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix F: Focus Group Letter

Dear X,

The Department of Adult Literacy seeks to provide the highest quality adult literacy education for the College students. As a result, a Doctoral Project Study is being conducted by a researcher named Yvette McCauley, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. The researcher is reviewing your course offerings and trying to assess their effectiveness, in an effort to evaluate and improve the current Adult Literacy Program. Also, the researcher is conducting a series of focus group discussions with first year traditional college students. You have been selected at random to participate in this study. Would you be willing to meet for one hour with 4-10 of your classmates and representative from the Adult Literacy Department to discuss your experience in the current Adult Literacy Program? We are interested in your honest impression of the course – what works and what doesn't work. Please be assured that nothing you say will be revealed to. Even your participation in the focus group will remain confidential. Please reply to this e-mail message, and check the appropriate boxes below. We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Yvette Folden McCauley, Doctoral Student
Walden University

I would like to participate in the focus group. I am able to meet at any one of the following times: (Please check as many as are convenient. We will schedule a meeting at one of your preferred times.)

☐ 1:00 PM, Monday, March. 2,

☐ 11:00 AM, Tuesday, March. 3

☐ 4:00 PM, Friday, March. 6

☐ I do not wish to participate in the focus group discussion

Appendix G: Program Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Objective	Stakeholder Group	Tools Used to Collect Data	When	Purpose
Evaluation Objective One: To document the depth and breadth of adult literacy evaluations provided during follow up session(2015)	Faculty, program education coordinator, education dean and education director	Interview	February	Summative
Evaluation Objective: To document the perceptions about the adult literacy program with the follow up questions	Students	Questionnaires Discussions	February-March	Summative
Evaluation Objective Three: To document faculty perceptions of the follow up questions.	Faculty and education director	Interviews	February-March	Summative
Evaluation Objective Four: To document changes in student learning abilities	Students	Literacy knowledge assessment	March 15 (post)	Summative

Appendix H: Student Preliminary Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to investigate relationships between a literacy intervention and academic success. It consists of three parts: 1) questions related to demographic background information of the respondent, 2) questions about the current adult literacy program, and 3) general open-ended questions. Please select answers that best describe your perceptions and opinions related to the adult literacy program. The results from this study will be kept anonymous.

Section 1: Background Information

1. Is your age between? ___18-21 ___22-25 ___26-30

2. What is your gender? ___ Male ___ Female

3. How do you describe yourself...?
 - American Indian or Alaska Native___
 - Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander___
 - Asian or Asian American___
 - Black or African American___
 - Hispanic or Latino___
 - Non-Hispanic White___
 - Other (please specify)_____

4. What is your marital status?
 - Married___
 - Divorced___
 - Widowed___
 - Separated___
 - Never been married___

6. What is your overall G.P.A._____

7. What is your College Entrance Test Score _____

8. Are you now employed...? ___full-time ___part-time ___unemployed

9. What is the highest grade or year of school you completed?
 - Never attended school or only attended kindergarten___
 - Grades 1 through 8(Elementary___)
 - Grades 9 through 11 (Some high school)___
 - Grade 12 or GED (High School graduate) ___

10. Do you know how you were assigned to the adult literacy program?
11. What is your major course of study?
12. How many credit hours have you currently earned?

STUDENT PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE CONTINUED...

Section 2: Please select the number to answer how you feel about the current adult literacy program (1 strongly disagree, 2 agree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4 disagree, 5 strongly disagree).

Question			Rating			Comments
1. Adult learners need strong, fluent reading skills in order to improve the likelihood of success?	1	2	3	4	5	
2. Reading achievement is the most important reason for coming to adult literacy classes?	1	2	3	4	5	
3. Reading better helped me to improve my daily life?	1	2	3	4	5	
4. The literacy intervention helped me to address grammar skills while at the same time encouraged me to practice writing?	1	2	3	4	5	
5. I know exactly what I am expected to know, do, or believe as a result of the adult literacy program?	1	2	3	4	5	
6. I have attended class more often as a result of improving my literacy skills?	1	2	3	4	5	
7. Technological tools can make the process of writing easier?	1	2	3	4	5	
8. Assessment procedures are used consistently in the program?	1	2	3	4	5	
9. Overall I am satisfied with the learning outcome of the adult literacy program at the College?	1	2	3	4	5	
10. I know exactly what I need to know to effectively communicate with my family and or on the job?	1	2	3	4	5	

Appendix I: Student Focus Group Interviews

Section 3:

1. Do you believe that your writing techniques, language proficiency, and reading skills improved through the new adult literacy curriculum? Explain your

answer. _____

2. Do you believe that your improvement or non-improvement in English language proficiency and literacy skills has led to a boost or reduction in your attendance? Explain your answer.

3. Based on your perceptions what has been the impact on your learning outcomes since the adult literacy program intervention? Please explain your answer.

4. Has your behavior changed as a result of learning outcomes in the reformed adult literacy program (for example, are you able to use what you have learned in your work, family, or community)? Please explain your answer?

5. Is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix J: Administrators and Faculty Preliminary Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to investigate relationships between a literacy intervention and academic success. It consists of parts: 1) questions related to demographic background information of the respondent, 2) questions about the current adult literacy program, 3) general open-ended questions and 4) follow up interviews. Please select answers that best describe your perceptions and opinions related to the adult literacy program. The results from this study will be kept anonymous.

Section 1: Background Information

1. Is your age between? ___18-21 ___22-25 ___26-30 ___31-35 ___
2. What is your gender? ___ Male ___ Female
3. How do you describe yourself...?
 - American Indian or Alaska Native___
 - Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander___
 - Asian or Asian American___
 - Black or African American___
 - Hispanic or Latino___
 - Non-Hispanic White___
 - Other (please specify)_____
4. What is your marital status?
 - Married___
 - Divorced___
 - Widowed ___
 - Separated___
 - Never been married___
6. School?_____
7. Grade/Subject?_____
7. What group do you identify yourself with? ___Administrator
___Faculty/faculty___
8. What is your area of certification?_____
9. What is the highest grade or year of school you completed?
 - College 1 year to 3 years (Some college of technical school)___
 - College 4 years (College graduate)___

- Graduate School (Advance Degree)____

10. Do you know how you were assigned to the adult literacy program?

11. Number of years of teaching experience in an adult learning environment? ____

**ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE
CONTINUED...**

Section 2: Please select the number to answer how you feel about the current adult literacy program (1 strongly disagree, 2 agree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4 disagree, 5 strongly disagree).

Question			Rating			Comments
1. Adult learners need strong, fluent reading skills in order to improve the likelihood of success?	1	2	3	4	5	
2. What is your most important reason for coming to adult literacy classes?	1	2	3	4	5	
3. Reading better helped students to improve in their daily lives?	1	2	3	4	5	
4. The literacy intervention helped students to address grammar skills while at the same time encouraged them to practice writing?	1	2	3	4	5	
5. I know exactly what I am expected to know, do, or believe as a result of the adult literacy program?	1	2	3	4	5	
6. Students who attended class more often as a result improved their adult literacy skills opposed to those students who were frequently absent?	1	2	3	4	5	
7. Technological tools could make the process of writing easier?	1	2	3	4	5	
8. Assessment procedures are used consistently in the program?	1	2	3	4	5	
9. Overall I am satisfied with the learning outcome of the adult literacy program at the College?	1	2	3	4	5	
10. I know exactly what I need to know to effectively communicate with my students?	1	2	3	4	5	

Appendix K: Administrator and Faculty Program Evaluation Follow-up Interview

Section 3: For questions one through ten please answer each question yes or no if required followed by a brief explanation.

1. What are the anticipated changes related to learning, application, and program impact?
2. How does the current adult literacy program meet a predetermined set of standards related to the process and outcomes of the program?
3. I know exactly what is expected of me in my job? Please explain.
4. Please describe if the workshops are well organized and coordinated?
5. Which literacy strategies are most effective in increasing adult student learning?
6. How did the current adult literacy program intervention have an impact on reading comprehension?
7. How well do instructors implement the current adult literacy intervention, and how does this effect learning?
8. Do students that received literacy instruction perform better on standardized test? How did you get involved?
9. Does the student's classroom attendance improve as a result of improving adult literacy skills? Why or why not?

**ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY PROGRAM EVALUATION FOLLOW UP
INTERVIEW CONTINUED...**

Section 4: Student learning development must be identified to truly determine the impact of the current adult literacy program. The key evaluation questions, therefore, are:

1. Do you believe that student writing techniques, language proficiency, and reading skills improved through the new adult literacy curriculum? Explain your answer. _____

2. Do you believe that student improvement or non-improvement in English language proficiency and literacy skills has led to a boost or reduction in their attendance? Explain your answer.

3. Based on your perceptions what has been the impact on student learning outcomes since the adult literacy program intervention? Please explain your answer.

4. Has student behavior changed as a result of learning outcomes in the reformed adult literacy program (for example, are they able to use what they have learned in their work, family, or community)? Please explain your answer?

5. Is there anything you would like to add?

3/9/2015 3:47 PM

Classification	Aggregate	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				1	MLS	3/6/2015 10:57 AM
There is a need to improve the quality of the current adult literacy program						
				2	MLS	3/6/2015 10:58 AM
The current adult literacy program needs improvement in the area of compliance with CHEA standards						
				3	MLS	3/6/2015 10:59 AM
I think that we are dedicated to implementing a quality program for our students in the adult literacy program.						
				4	MLS	3/6/2015 1:00 PM
We could do a better job of ensuring that the adult literacy program is in compliance with the CHEA professional standards						
				5	MLS	3/6/2015 4:01 PM
Funding helps support the adult literacy program						

Appendix M: Transcript of Student Focus Group Follow up Interview Response

(Note duplication of one student focus group responses; all identifying information of the respondents has been removed).

Section 3: Question 1 responses

Do you believe that your writing techniques, language proficiency, and reading skills improved through the new adult literacy curriculum? Explain your answer

1 Through the changed adult literacy curriculum I have developed strong language, literacy, and computer skills.

Section 3: Question 2 responses

Do you believe that your improvement or non-improvement in English language proficiency and literacy skills has led to a boost or reduction in your attendance? Explain your answer.

2 Yes. Changing the literacy program helped me to increase in my reading and writing skills. I also enjoy working on my projects using the computer modules. I look forward to coming to class regularly.

Section 3: Question 3 responses

Based on your perceptions what has been the impact on your learning outcomes since the adult literacy program intervention? Please explain your answer.

3 Since the use of technology is now prominent in the adult literacy program, the faculty members are more involved in presenting a step-by-step process to the students, and I feel that I am comprehending more through this process.

Section 3: Question 4 responses

Has your behavior changed as a result of learning outcomes in the reformed adult literacy program (for example, are you able to use what you have learned in your work, family, or community)? Please explain your answer?

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4	Currently I am a stay at home mom, but I am sure that the knowledge and skills I am gaining from the program will help me to get a job. Once a get the job I will be able to communicate effectively and use the computer more proficiently.
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Section 3: Question 5 responses

Has your behavior changed as a result of learning outcomes in the reformed adult literacy program (for example, are you able to use what you have learned in your work, family, or community)? Please explain your answer?

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5	Is there anything you would like to add? I am more satisfied with the new program than the old one.
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